

GERMAN RELIGIOUS LIFE  
IN COLONIAL TIMES

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LUCY FORNEY BITTINGER

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BY LUCY FORNEY BITTINGER  
AUTHOR OF "THE GERMANS IN COLONIAL TIMES"



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TO  
A. M. F.



## FOREWORD.

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It is hoped that this caption, derived from the German *Vorwort*, instead of the more usual "Preface," may not seem affected in a book treating of matters Germanic.

The work deals with much the same subject as that of my earlier book, "The Germans in Colonial Times." But it is specifically confined to an account of the religious life of the same period and people. A better title would have been "Church Life," were it not that the restriction of the term "church" to the three tolerated confessions—Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic—makes this title seem to confine the subject of the work to them, whereas the story of the sects forms a large part of it, as well in importance as in bulk.

It has been my aim to make the history a connected story, not following the thread of each separate denomination's annals, but rather trying to look over the whole field and narrate the general course of ecclesiastical life among the Germans in America during the Colonial era.

LUCY FORNEY BITTINGER.

SEWICKLEY, PENNSYLVANIA.

JULY 9, 1906.



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# GERMAN RELIGIOUS LIFE IN COLONIAL TIMES



## CHAPTER I

### RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS IN GERMANY

THE history of religious life in this country, as it has manifested itself among the English-speaking portion of our people, has been abundantly studied. In particular, of making various books about the Puritans of New England and their spiritual descendants, there is no end. But the same life as it has manifested itself among the German Americans has been much neglected, save on the part of denominational annalists who have often shed more heat than light upon history. Some account of German religious life, especially in the Colonial period of our history, would seem to be worth attempting.

In order to understand German religious life we must understand the Germany from which it took its rise; not the heroic Germany of the Reformation era, not the powerful Empire of our own time, but the very different land of the eighteenth century. Between that Germany and the other two lies the abyss of the Thirty Years' War, and it was out of this pit of abasement and suffering that the first German emigrants came to this country.

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When we, at the present day, speak of Germany and the Germans, we unconsciously think of the great world power which now bears that name, the land of Goethe and Schiller, of Beethoven and Wagner, of Bismarck and Moltke. But the Germany from which the Colonial Germans emigrated was one in which misgovernment and a shameful yet shameless subserviency to French influence were the chief characteristics of its rulers. Its literary light was the feeble glimmer of Klopstock and Herder and Gellert, with Leibnitz and Lessing as the only great names. Music,—devoted largely to sacred themes, under “the two glorious Saxons,” Bach and Handel—was the highest exemplification of art. Painting in the land of Dürer was then represented by Raphael Mengs, while architecture lingered among the relics of Gothic grandeur which had chanced to escape the destruction of the Thirty Years’ War, manifesting itself only in the tasteless exuberance of the Rococo style, imitated from France. The magnificent courage and freedom of the Reformers, those contemporaries of Huss and Luther and Zwingli, had paled and fallen into a dry scholasticism against which mysticism and, later, Pietism, were effectual though sometimes extravagant protests.

Yet it was in the religious field that the best and deepest German thinking was going on, an illustration of which is the fact that of all the literary productions of the eighteenth century, the best are the hymns. Gellert, dull and full of mannerisms in his fables, becomes inspired to the best strains of which he is capable in his



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religious poetry ; while Gerhardt, who wrote nothing but religious poetry and that "under circumstances when most men would weep rather than sing,"<sup>1</sup> produced a great body of deep and exquisite verse. Professional theologians, such as Arnold, Thomasius and Bengel, were men of deep erudition, though they certainly did not wear their learning lightly and imparted it in the terrible diction of their time—dialectic German interlarded with Latin or French words, constructed as only a German Gelehrter can construct and as only his countrymen can read.

A powerful influence to keep alive the flame of piety in those degenerate times was the work of that orthodox mystic Johann Arndt, author of the famous book "von Wahren Christenthum" which was for a century and a half the favorite reading of pious people all over Germany. Born a generation after the Reformation took its rise, dying in the early years of the Thirty Years' War, his book strengthened and edified the people through the period we treat of and in large degree formed the type of religious character in that period before Pietism took up the work. His chief thesis is that a man's life is the main part of his creed. Repentance means a change of heart and must show itself in love to God and one's neighbor. Theological orthodoxy is very well, but he taught—and was bitterly persecuted and vilified for teaching it—the important thing is to evidence faith by works. This is good Lutheran doctrine,—that of the Augsburg Confession, as he himself

<sup>1</sup> Winkworth's "Christian Singers of Germany."

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proved and reiterated,—but doctrine which many theologians of his day treated as though it were the sum of all iniquity. Nevertheless the common people heard him gladly ; his book, arranged for reading through the church year and for catechetical instruction, was regarded as almost inspired, and modern editions still contain the account of its “ Fourteen Miraculous Preservations ” during the Thirty Years’ War. Bound with a beautiful collection of prayers, or rather devout meditations, called by the quaint title “ Paradise Garden of the Christian Soul ” and illustrated with innumerable religious “ emblems ” of every conceivable kind, it is still popular and beloved among pious Germans, especially the Lutherans.

Jakob Boehme, the mystical shoemaker of Görlitz, had somewhat of the same influence upon Separatists which Arndt had upon the orthodox church people. His theosophy was a strange mixture of alchemy and the doctrine of signatures, with a certain anticipation of the Swedenborgian doctrine of “ correspondence ; ” but he wrote even after his miraculous “ illuminations,” in the crabbed and obscure style of an uneducated man and his “ Aurora ” never had the popularity, as it had also not a tithe of the power, of Arndt’s simple, beautiful, practical book.

Another influence, though somewhat more limited than either Arndt’s or Boehme’s, was the imaginative production of Pastor Andreä, a Lutheran clergyman of Württemberg, a contemporary of Arndt. Andreä wrote the account of a crusader, Christian Rosencrantz, who

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was supposed to have been initiated into the religious order of the Rosicrucians. His followers, after having existed for centuries in secret, now desired the world to profit by their occult powers and would be glad to communicate with like-minded people. It was, in fact, a pious mystification designed to ridicule astrology and alchemy and call attention to various things which Andreaë thought might be amended or undertaken by such a society as his fancied Rosicrucians; but the public was attracted by the magic and mystery, and not at all by the reformatory schemes; so the author never lifted the veil from his society which had grown, like Frankenstein's monster, too powerful for its creator. To Arndt, whose attention was attracted by the account of the society, and who wrote for further information, Andreaë acknowledged the imaginary nature of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood.

Separatism in all of its many forms was especially rife in the Rhine Country, from which most of our early German emigration came. It varied all the way from the pious opinions held or taught by some pastor or writer, and perhaps his little circle of followers or readers, to societies approaching monasticism in their constitution, or the larger and more formally organized movement, which was called by its enemies Anabaptist; this had, apparently, no connection with the socialistic and secular one known as the Peasants' War, but took its rise during Zwingli's lifetime in Switzerland, and at first placed little stress on the time or mode of baptism. Persecution scattered it far and wide; the disorder of

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Münster, although the only instance of fanaticism among the German Anabaptists, gave it a bad repute. It was afterwards reformed by Simon Menno, and from the middle of the sixteenth century his followers were called Mennonites, which designation supplanted the older one of Anabaptists.

The most important factor in the religious life of Germany, however, was the movement called Pietism; this grew to be powerful over the whole nation, in all ranks, among Catholics and Protestants. It took its name from the treatise of "Pia Desideria," published in 1675 by Spener, who is often called its founder. But Pietism was too large a thing to be founded by any one man or one book, and must have been existent long before it thus became crystallized by Spener's impulse. The mysticism of Boehme, Andreä and scores of others; the practical piety taught in Arndt's "True Christianity;" the insistence of the Anabaptists upon purity in life; the severe puritanic discipline in the Reformed church of Zwingli—all these were caught up into one great whole, to color religious and secular life in Germany through more than a century following the publication of the "Pia Desideria."

Philip Jacob Spener was an Alsatian—as he himself always proudly insisted, "a Strasburger." The fact that he was connected by birth and education with the Lutheran Church of this land, so far from the original seat of the Saxon Reformation, so near Calvinistic Switzerland, proved a powerful influence in his religious development. Studying in many universities, learned in

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many subjects and with considerable experience of the world, he ever remained the typical, shy, awkward scholar. His meeting with Labadie while studying in Geneva was probably the most important of all outward influences upon his future beliefs and practices. Jean de Labadie was a Frenchman of noble family, first a Jesuit, then a Jansenist; so popular that crowds of adherents followed him from one end of France to the other. Not desiring to break with Catholicism, many of whose characteristics he loved to the end of his life, he entered, or was thrust by Roman persecution, in his fortieth year, into the Reformed Church. On his way from the Principality of Orange, now besieged by Louis XIV, to take refuge in London, he was called by the authorities of Geneva to be their pastor. "Thus was Labadie, the second Reformer of the French Reformed Church after Calvin, involuntarily transplanted to the city of Calvin, this most favored centre of influence for the Christian life in France, Italy, Germany and England."<sup>1</sup> Here Spener first met him, frequented his preaching and learned in particular two things which Labadie had introduced from the Jansenists of Port Royal into the Protestant church—the value of meetings for Bible study and the formation of little circles of especially enlightened or pious people which should be a centre of light to others on a lower plane of Christian life. These became the cardinal principles of Spener's Pietism. These he subsequently introduced into his church in Frankfort and these he advised in his famous

<sup>1</sup>Goebel, Vol. II, p. 199.

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book "Pia Desideria," in the preparation of which he made free use of the writings of Labadie.

Frankfort might be called the metropolis of the German Rhineland,—“The old Imperial city, the centre of the German Empire, important for its commerce, the seat of the book trade and of intellectual intercourse.”<sup>1</sup> It was also a metropolis for the district of the Wetterau, afterwards so famous for its separatism. Here Spener “became the centre of Christian life in the Protestant church of Western Germany.” He founded many little circles for the study of Scripture; he introduced catechization for the instruction of young people in Christian truth preparatory to their confirmation and—most offensive of all—believed that in all churches, even the Reformed, there might be found truth and wise examples of Christian living. He even went so far as to desire a union between the warring Lutheran and Reformed churches. Hatred, vilification, persecution, never destroyed in him the spirit of faith, love and work; and Pietism became the saving salt, first of the Lutherans and afterwards to a large extent of all the German churches and sects. After twenty years of grandly successful religious work in Frankfort, Spener was called to Dresden to be the spiritual father of the Elector there; but he found his position at the Saxon court so uncomfortable and the Elector so indignant at his courageous reproofs, that he was glad to accept a call to Berlin, where, after another period of twenty years as laborious and fruitful as his Frankfort pastorate, he died.

<sup>1</sup> Goebel, Vol. II p. 557.

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The attempt to found *collegia pietatis* in Leipzig under the leadership of Francke and others brought on persecution, insomuch that the brilliant professor Thomasius, who had defended these leaders, was obliged to seek safety from a heresy trial in flight. A consequence of this flight was the founding of the University of Halle, which became the headquarters of Pietists and Pietism. Spener had great influence here, though he was far from approving of all that was done and warned the heads of the University against certain extravagances. But it was immensely popular from the first, the concourse of students being second only to that resulting from Luther's teaching at Wittenberg one hundred and fifty years before. From Halle Pietism spread to other universities and to the little courts. By the opening of the eighteenth century it was preached from village pulpits, the very strongholds of conservatism. Francke, Spener's son-in-law, became in a manner his successor in the leadership of the movement and it was here at Halle, too, that Francke gave it its new direction in the way of merciful works. The famous Halle Orphanage and the Bible Institute, founded in fulfilment of a vow by Baron von Canstein, were located in the Saxon city. Canstein's name illustrates the fact that Pietism found many of its adherents among the so-called upper classes—nobles, university graduates, clergymen and writers. Separatism and particularly the sects, on the contrary, found their adherents among artisans, weavers (who had been heretics by trade from pre-reformation times), shoemakers like



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Jakob Boehme, bakers like Beissel, saddlers like Rock.

Many of the small principalities which were so abundant in the Rhineland exercised the right which, under the loosely constituted Empire, some of the smallest jurisdictions possessed, of protecting sects which were not tolerated elsewhere. Eminent among these pietistic courts were those of Isenburg-Büdingen and Wittgenstein. Sometimes the rulers made a sort of religious pet of some conspicuously "pious" person;—for example a certain duke was wont to act as coachman, driving pietistic artisans' wives in his ducal carriage. But such incidents were mostly later excrescences of the cult.

In time Pietism grew narrower and sometimes developed an intolerance of its own. Its separatistic tendency cannot be denied, although Spener was able personally to bring back to his Frankfort church nearly all of those who in the excess of their early zeal felt the "great church" too coldly formal for them. But not all of Spener's followers had the broad-mindedness, the learning and the charity which distinguished their great leader, and their frequent schisms can neither be denied nor excused. The narrowness of Pietism, its sublime selfishness of interest in personal salvation only, its self-righteousness even in the midst of professions of extravagant humility, its objections to innocent customs and amusements, its liability to give rise to cant and hypocrisy—all these faults may be admitted without detracting from the great and real service which it did, not only to the Lutheran but to the whole Protestant



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church;—not only to the religious but to the national life. The Pietists were the first to make Christian love and pity for all men important, or sympathy with the poor fashionable. They introduced schools and orphanages and the care of the poor. Afterwards leading philosophers like Leibnitz tried to improve the worldly condition of the masses. Goethe in his “Hermann and Dorothea,” first proved to the Germans that the life of the common people is fit material for poetry. The close of the Thirty Years’ War had, by a natural reaction, produced a class of rude vicious roisterers among the upper classes such as disgraced the English Restoration;—men who cared neither for God nor man, least of all for their poor subjects or dependents. Pietism stood for the rights of all as children of a common Father. Woman, too often regarded as a toy or drudge, was honored among the Pietists as were the prophetesses whom Tacitus described among the Germans of his day. The earliest truly national movements in which the people without the initiative of princes took part, were the benevolences of Halle; the orphan houses there were the first objects for which a public subscription was taken in Germany. All this tenderness of heart could easily turn into the gushing sentimentality to which the Teutonic soul is naturally prone. It inculcated a subserviency toward “all in authority” which was not needed in an already servile people; it produced a peculiar dialect that hardened into cant when religious matters were mentioned and it fostered a tone of sentimentality in secular things as well. Probably Freytag is right

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when he says that "Werther is a descendant of Pietism."

In purely literary matters this form of practical religion made for a purer German style with less parade of erudition in classical quotation. Thomasius is perhaps the best type of the literary man produced by this way of thinking. "Talented, easily moved, fond of a fight, of applause; exciting everyone by his restless activity; for Pietists against persecuting orthodoxy and equally against fanatical superstition; he fought for toleration and morality against every sort of superstition or fanaticism." The influence of Spener's later reformation upon the hymnology of the period was not particularly marked or distinguished; some good writers of hymns and devotional works,—Rodigast, Laurenti, and Bogatzky, the author of the "Golden Treasury,"—made up the sum of their success in this line of work.

That Pietism prepared the way for Rationalism is a favorite reproach of orthodox writers, and probably it is true to the extent that the study of theology and Scripture would naturally lead to freedom of investigation and consequent free thought. Thus Bengel, author of the much studied commentary, the "Gnomon," and Semler, the earliest of the higher critics, were both of the pietistic school. But after all deductions are made, all unfortunate tendencies, all extravagances of the movement pointed out, the truth remains that it was necessary, if the fruits of the Reformation were to be anything but dead scholasticism and formalism, that the waters of German religious life should be troubled by a strong

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angel of the Lord. That messenger of God was Pietism.

NOTE: The authorities used in the preparation of the introductory chapter on the condition of Germany are first and foremost Freytag: "Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit" (Leipzig, 1898), Vols. III and IV, and Goebel: "Geschichte des Christlichen Lebens in Westphal-Rheinischen Pfalz" (Coblentz, 1852-62), particularly Vol. II. The works of E. Belfort Bax: "The Peasants' War" (London 1899), and "Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists" (London and New York, 1903), give a thorough understanding of those earlier movements, though disfigured by personal prejudice against church leaders. Kurtz: "Church History," translated by McPherson (New York, 1894), is exhaustive, though dull. Vaughn's "Hours with the Mystics" (third edition, 1879), has copious extracts from mystical writings. A study of Arndt's "Wahres Christenthum," of which there are many editions, is indispensable to an understanding of the religious thought of the period. So is the secular literature; Klopstock's "Messiah," the writings of Wieland and Herder and some of Goethe's works (the "Confessions of a Fair Saint" in "Wilhelm Meister"), Miss Winkworth's "Christian Singers of Germany" (Philadelphia, 1869), with the hymns of the time, is valuable. Hedges' "Hours with the German Classics" (Boston, 1892), and Kuno Francke's "Social Forces in German Literature," give helpful sidelights. The "List of Works Consulted" in the preparation of my earlier book, "The Germans in Colonial Times" (Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1901), gives titles of many other books and articles bearing more or less remotely on the subject of this work which may be serviceable to anyone wishing to make a more detailed study of the matter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SEPARATISTS

THE first German emigration to America was of Separatists and the earliest emigrants were nearly all of this religious persuasion. The Separatists were of two sorts: those who separated themselves from the organized churches, the Lutheran and Reformed, and those who did not come out from any church, but formed groups or loosely cohering sects of their own. The latter kind were most commonly thrust out by persecution; the former, the "churchly Separatists," as they are called by Goebel in his "Geschichte des Christlichen Lebens," often left the Babylon of some established church from an exaggerated opinion of ecclesiastical corruption and their own superior righteousness.

First of the Separatist emigration in point of time, number and importance were the Mennonites. These followers of Menno Simon had had surcease from severe persecution for more than a century when Penn made known among the Dutch Mennonites the plans for a colony of religious freedom. The Princes of the House of Orange, beginning with William the Silent, had found the "Weaponless Christians"—their chosen name—so peaceable, harmless and industrious that they had granted the sect a toleration expressly denied Anabaptists by the Peace of Westphalia. Thus Holland became the natural

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refuge of the Mennonites, and the centre of their church ;—from that land went out help to the poor brethren in Germany ; there were printed their Bibles and hymn books and Confession of Faith, and the ponderous history of their martyrs.

In Germany they were settled in the Pfalz, invited thither by the elector, Karl Ludwig, in 1671 ; also in Elsass, reinforced by “ the Switzers which were fled thither from Zurich.”<sup>1</sup> These Anabaptists of the Palatinate were said to be industrious, supporting their own pastors and sick members, but not in communion with other Mennonists. “ Most Protestants are very willing to employ them, because they are sober, industrious and understand all trades except such machines and instruments as are made use of in war.”<sup>2</sup>

The chief seat of the German Mennonites, however, was Crefeld, very near the Holland boundary ; it became in some sort a Mennonite capital. The prosperity of the town comes from the industries brought thither by Mennonite weavers. Crefeld was a centre for many and divers Separatists ;—there the Labadists were numerous ; the sweet-spirited mystic Hochman von Hochenau, the French nobleman and hermit, de Marsay, the saintly hymn-writer, Tersteegen, and many others came and went, or lived in Crefeld, or wrote to religious friends there. But the most important visitor to Crefeld—important for the purposes of this narrative—was the rich,

<sup>1</sup> Preface to the Mennonite Confession of Faith, reprinted by Andrew Bradford in Philadelphia, 1727.

<sup>2</sup> Ott, quoted in Picart, Religious Ceremonies, Vol. VII, London, 1737.

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gifted young English Quaker who came there repeatedly, preached to large congregations of Mennonites and so interested them that a small band decided to cross the wide Atlantic to their powerful friend's new province, and there seek worldly and spiritual prosperity.

On William Penn's second "religious visit" to Germany, he became acquainted with a choice circle of Pietists in Frankfort, a little *collegia pietatis*, which met in the Saalhof, the mansion of one of its wealthier members. Among its members were many noble, wealthy and learned people, but the only one who concerns our story was the young Franconian doctor of laws, Francis Daniel Pastorius. He was fascinated by Penn, a most attractive and charming gentleman; but Pastorius and his friends of the Saalhof were especially delighted by the prospect of forming a colony in the American wilderness, far from the wickedness, strifes, and persecutions which distressed the godly in Europe, and they eagerly entered into the project of purchasing land. Twenty-five thousand acres were bought in the American forest. Pastorius was made the agent of the "Frankfort Company," and sailed for the New World on the ship *America*, to prepare the way for the coming of the rest of the Frankfort friends.

But alas, for the fallibility of human expectations! Not one of the Saalhof circle ever joined their agent Pastorius in Pennsylvania. Instead, there came in the autumn of 1683 on the *Concord*, a little company of energetic Mennonite weavers from Crefeld, to whom Penn had also sold land in his province and who did not

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intrust their affairs to any agent, but went themselves to take possession.

There were thirty-three of these "Pennsylvania Pilgrims," as Whittier has sung them;—they were nearly all connected by blood and marriage, and belonged to the Mennonite sect. The Concord had, as an English Quaker who was a fellow passenger tells us, "a very comfortable passage." Shortly after arriving their land was surveyed for them and, meeting in the cave where Pastorius was lodged on the river bank, the Crefeld friends drew lots for the ground they were to occupy and Germantown was founded. Pastorius says: "It could not be described, nor would it be believed by coming generations in what want and need, and with what Christian contentment and persistent industry this Germantown-ship started." "Want and need" soon gave way before the persistent industry of the Mennonite colonists. Yearly they received accessions from home; the immigrants were industrious, often men of substance or of learning; and all cheerful, courageous and God-fearing.

A year after the beginning of the "Germantown-ship," a very different sort of colony landed in Lord Baltimore's new province of Maryland—the Labadists of Bohemia Manor. After leaving successively the Jesuit order and the Catholic church, Labadie had separated himself from the Reformed church as well and headed a little community of his own. For a time the Labadists enjoyed the protection of the Princess Elizabeth, the Abbess of Herford, but their enthusiastic excesses drove them from this asylum. They then went to a nobleman's estate,



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Wiewaert, in Holland, where they soon found themselves straitened to support so large a community, and they looked about for a place to which to send a colony. Two of their number, Sluyter and Dankers, went to spy out the land in America. They made some friends and converts, notably Pieter Beyaert, the ancestor of the Bayard family, and Ephraim Hermann, son of Augustine Hermann, the Lord of Bohemia Manor in Maryland. The younger Hermann procured land for them from his unwilling father, and a colony was founded there in 1683, which never exceeded 100 men, women and children in numbers, lapsed woefully from the high plane of Labadie's teaching and perished utterly, in the early years of the eighteenth century. The whole episode is scarcely worth mention, did it not show how widespread was the drawing towards the new world of religious freedom among the sectaries and Separatists of the old world.

Meanwhile Pastorius and his Mennonite fellow townsmen were so far prospered that they had means to build a church,—at first probably a Quaker meeting house; but presently they decided that “although they did not agree, since at this time the most were still Quakers, nevertheless they found it good to have exercises together” and presently ordained William Ruttinghausen as their preacher. Thus the little Mennonite flock increased and multiplied, and as the land was gradually taken up, daughter churches were established in other settlements around.

In 1688 there went out from four of these Germantown



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colonists to the Quaker "Monthly Meeting" the first public protest made on this continent against the holding of slaves. It was immediately stifled in the meeting, for English Friends had not then the tender conscience of German Christians; that protest was unknown save to a few antiquarians for almost two centuries; nevertheless it was the brave and unselfish beginning of a great moral conflict, and "when hereafter men trace analytically the causes which led to Gettysburg and Appomattox they will begin with the tender consciences of the linen weavers and husbandmen of Germantown."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pennypacker's Settlement of Germantown, p. 145. Apparently this tender conscience among the Mennonites lasted until John Woolman's time, for he notes in his account of a religious journey in 1758: "A friend gave me some account of a religious society among the Dutch, called Mennonists, and amongst other things related a passage in substance as follows: One of the Mennonists having acquaintance with a man of another society at a considerable distance, and being with his wagon on business near the house of his said acquaintance, and night coming on, he had thoughts of putting up with him, but passing by his fields and observing the distressed appearance of his slaves, he kindled a fire in the woods hard by and lay there that night. His said acquaintance hearing where he had lodged, and afterwards meeting the Mennonist, told him of it, adding he should have been heartily welcome at his house, and from their acquaintance in former times wondered at his conduct in that case. The Mennonist replied, 'Ever since I lodged by thy field I have wanted an opportunity to speak with thee. I had intended to come to thy house for entertainment, but seeing thy slaves at their work, and observing the manner of their dress, I had no liking to come and partake with thee.' He then admonished him to use them with more humanity, and added: 'As I lay by the fire that night, I thought that as I was a man of substance thou wouldst have received me freely; but if I had been as poor as one of thy slaves, and had no power to help myself, I should have received from thy hand no kinder usage than they.'" (Journal. Boston ed. 1872, p. 122.)

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Among the additions to the colony was one of strange and pathetic interest. In 1694 there came to Germantown a blind old man led by his aged wife. On inquiry it appeared that he was a Mennonist and so a collection was made for him by the preacher Ruttinghausen, a lot was given him, a little house built and a tree planted in front of it. How much of his story was known at the time did not appear; but we now know that just before Oliver Cromwell's death a Dutch Mennonite named Cornelis Plockhoy sent him two communications, in which were set forth the plans of a Christian commonwealth wherein church and state should be wholly separate, where rich and poor should be on an equality of labor, and where "no lordship or servile slavery shall burden our company." The death of Cromwell and the disorders of the Restoration put an end to any hopes Plockhoy might have had of help from the English rulers for realizing his dream. He returned to his Dutch home, and thence in 1662, led out a colony of twenty-five people, Mennonites like their leader, to "the Valley of the Swans"<sup>1</sup> in New Netherlands.

The site was not ill-chosen, although, indeed, a colony led thither thirty years before had been exterminated by the Indians, the bones of the massacred being still scattered on the shore. Nor was Plockhoy's scheme a visionary or fanatic one;—the modern reader is struck by his broadmindedness, his astonishing forecast of the most advanced modern social conditions. His project proves the intellectual ability of the Netherland

<sup>1</sup> Now Lewes, Delaware.

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Mennonites. But the fates were against him. When, as a result of the war between the Dutch and English, New Netherlands was lost to the former, the English governor of New York sent a boat to the Valley of the Swans, demolished the settlement and carried off "what belonged to the Quaking Society of Plockhoy to a very naile." The fate of the settlers is still a mystery; but the blind old man who found refuge at Germantown in 1694 after more than three decades of trackless wanderings was Cornelis Plockhoy.

In this same year there came to Germantown another band of settlers not in the least like this gifted and hapless prophet, nor like the staid and sensible burghers who made constant addition to the number and efficiency of the community. These were the students of Jakob Boehme, the so-called Rosicrucians, the community of the "Woman in the Wilderness," the Hermits of the Wissahickon. By these several names are they known to posterity; but little that is trustworthy is known of them, their life or their opinions. The community was first gathered by a pastor of Würtemberg, Zimmerman by name, of whose learning and piety Gerard Croese, the Quaker historian, speaks warmly. Several university men, clergymen, teachers and students, were attracted by Zimmerman and desired to depart with him from "those Babilonish coasts, to these American Plantations . . . wherein they might mind this one thing to wit: to show with unanimous consent their Faith and Love in the Spirit in converting of people, but at the same time to sustain their bodies by their daily

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labour.”<sup>1</sup> The Hermits of the Wissahickon were not very successful in “showing Love,” for after Zimmerman’s death—which occurred on the eve of the embarkation from Rotterdam—the new head of the community, Koster, on the voyage over, excommunicated, another member, Falkner, then started a rival society which he named “The House of Peace.” This having disintegrated he joined the secession from the Quakers led by George Keith, but found himself not wanted there; finally he sailed back to Europe, where he taught the numerous languages which he knew and “maintained stoutly that he would never die and came pretty near keeping his word, since he reached the age of ninety-eight years and retained his health and vivacity until the last.”

Kelpius, who was chosen head of the hermit society instead of the erratic Koster, was a learned, devout and lovely character, but died young, and then the society of the Woman in the Wilderness fell to pieces. Several scattered members of the community continued a hermit existence near Germantown for many years, teaching a little school, practising alchemy, herb doctoring, casting nativities; or following the more worldly craft of book-binding, but above all, studying Jakob Boehme’s theosophical writings. The Falkner brothers, the most clear-headed of these mystics, soon left the community and became useful ministers of the Lutheran church. The Hermits of the Wissahickon, as a community, were nearly without influence on the religious life of Pennsylvania; but they deserve notice as straws which show

<sup>1</sup> Contemporary letter in possession of Governor Pennypacker.

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what way the Separatistic wind blew in those times. Their quaint, old-world rites and supposed Rosicrucian opinions have given rise to much popular interest and much imaginative, and inaccurate, writing.

Meantime the colonists of Germantown had founded a town government, which died of inanition in a short time, since the religious principles of Mennonites did not permit them to take part in government. They built themselves a church, and started a school, taught by Pastorius, and for which he wrote and published a primer, the first original school-book printed in Pennsylvania. A colony of German Friends, Quaker converts made by William Ames and visited by Penn, came over—the only Quakers of Teutonic nationality—and placed the name of their village, Kreisheim (near Worms) in the form of Cresheim in the nomenclature of Germantown. Later, German Mennonites of the Amish variety came from the Palatinate, though they held no fellowship with the Dutch followers of Menno, having excommunicated the latter on the burning question of the rightfulness of wearing buttons instead of hooks and eyes. The “ban” of which Mennonites have always made great use, considering that they are a peace sect, was freely employed by many sects of the Mennonites against one another.

A notable number of books were written in the Germantown colony from its earliest years, which goes far to contradict the impression of the first Teutonic settlement in America being one of “German boors”—to quote Franklin’s unhappy expression—or, as exclusively

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composed of simple weavers and farmers. Of those connected with the colony as "promoters," to borrow a modern word, or as actual settlers, sixteen "wrote books and produced literary labors, some of them of magnitude and importance."<sup>1</sup> Here also was begun the weaving of linen and of cloth and the making of paper. The little town was the metropolis of German America, even long after losing its Mennonite and Quaker coloring, or Separatistic tendencies. Thither came the German settlers direct after their landing; from it went out the settlers who gradually spread over Montgomery, Lancaster and Berks Counties.

Of one of the earliest settlers, said to be Kurtz, this legend has been preserved:<sup>2</sup> "In the year 1720 a thousand acres were offered to an influential member of the Amish faith by the proprietary agent, but he refused the grant saying: 'It is beyond my desire as also beyond my ability to clear; if clear, beyond my ability to cultivate; if cultivated, it would yield more than my family can consume; and as the rules of our society forbid the disposal of the surplus, I cannot accept of your liberal offer, but you may divide it among my married children who at present reside with me.'" If this was really Kurtz, the first ironmaster of Pennsylvania—having built a furnace on the Octoraro in 1726—he evidently had not the usual objection of his sect to engaging in other occupations than farming.

<sup>1</sup> See Pennypacker's *Settlement of Germantown* for a list of these authors, p. 290, and reproductions of many title pages.

<sup>2</sup> See Redmond Coningham's MS. "History of the Mennonists and Amish," in possession of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

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It was in 1727 that the project, long before mooted at Germantown, of republishing the Mennonite Confession of Faith was carried into effect. The elders signing it were three from Germantown, five from "Shipack," five from "Canastoge," two from Manatany and one from Great Swamp;—these names indicating the places in which the sect had organized churches. We know that from 1711 to 1732 the committee "on foreign needs" of Mennonites at Amsterdam were constantly giving help to distressed brethren of the faith who desired to go to Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> At length the committee abandoned the work in despair, as too great for them; but the emigrants were not stopped thereby, nor did help from private sources cease. We cannot estimate the numbers of "defenceless Christians" who took refuge in Pennsylvania, save by the fact that at the close of the eighteenth century, the American Mennonites reported to their brethren in Holland between two and three hundred communities scattered over Pennsylvania and in the Valley of Virginia.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. de Hoop Scheffer of Amsterdam, translated in Pennypacker's *Historical and Biographical Essays*.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest of these bands was the little knot of persecuted Mennonites ejected from Berne, parted from their wives and children at Mannheim on the Palatinate and liberated on reaching the Netherlands. The Mennonites at Nymwegen were much touched by the sufferings and patience of these exiles and willingly helped them, first to return to the Palatinate to their families if possible, then to emigrate to Pennsylvania. These were perhaps the Swiss Mennonites for whom de Graffenried sought an asylum in North Carolina, and some of them came under the leadership of Hans Herr and Martin Kündig to Lancaster County in Pennsylvania and were the forerunners of the large Mennonite emigration there in later years.



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Sometime before the publication of the Christian Confession, as it is called, there arrived in Penn's province the forerunners of another Separatist sect—the largest organized body of them outside the Mennonites. These were the people called Dunkards or Dunkers; Germans of their time named them Schwarzenau Täufer, or Tunkers, from a familiar word meaning to dip;—this, of course, referred to their practice of immersion in baptism. The Dunkards were often confused with the Mennonites in earlier times, but they were quite distinct in origin and history, their similarity extending no further than that both were organized Separatist bodies, had a “testimony” against infant baptism and war, and that both were strong in the region of Crefeld, the “Separatist capital.”

In studying the origin of the Dunkers (to give them their best-known and more accurate English name), we are brought face to face with the lovely character of Hochmann von Hochenau—a character and history so representative of the best and noblest in churchly Separatism that a short study of it may be edifying as well as instructive.

Ernst Christopher Hochmann von Hochenau was born in 1670 of a noble Saxon family. He was brought up a Lutheran, went to the newly-founded University of Halle to hear the lectures of the exiled Professor Thomasius, was converted there through the instrumentality of the elder Francke, and afterwards spent some time at the other Pietistic university of Giessen, under the brilliant and learned Separatist Gottfried Arnold. If these names show the influence under which he was educated, those



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following indicate the writers whom he most prized. First of all his "Herzensbruder" Arnold; then Jane Leade and Dr. Pordage, the English "Philadelphians" and students of Boehme; Menno Simons and David Joris, the Mennonite; Boehme himself; the French mystic, Poiret; Molinos the Quietist, and Petersen, who was prominent in the pietistic circle of Frankfort whence Pastorius went out to Germantown. In 1698 Hochmann himself was in Frankfort laboring unsuccessfully for the conversion of Jews; abandoning this, he spent the next years of his life going up and down the land, through all northern and western Germany. He was persecuted in every imaginable way—flogged, exiled, tried before courts civil and ecclesiastical, and imprisoned half-a-dozen times in various parts of Germany, one imprisonment lasting a whole year. During this incarceration at Nürnberg (where he had once been offered a high position in the city government), he was required to furnish a statement of his beliefs, from which statement we learn that his heresies were on the subjects of the ordinances, the millennium, the possible restoration of the wicked, and the superiority of the celibate over the married life. However indifferent these opinions seem to us, they were by no means so regarded by the Church and State in Hochmann's time, and he suffered everything for propagating them. At length the Countess Hedwig Sophie of Berleberg gave him a refuge in her dominions at Schwarzenau and there Hochmann built himself a little house of two rooms, which he called Friedensburg—"the castle of peace,"—though it was not destined to be

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such. On his religious journeys through Germany, Hochmann was always accompanied by friends who took care of him, a very necessary devotion on their part, since the mystic "did not notice outward occurrences, so that some one must go before him when he traveled from place to place, whom he followed like a lamb." One of these brethren was Alexander Mack, a well-to-do miller of Schwarzenau, who in pursuance of Hochmann's teachings had left the church in which he had been brought up and become a Separatist. A little circle which gathered around Hochmann for instruction was left to the leadership of Mack in Hochmann's absence. During Hochmann's long imprisonment in Nürnberg the pious people of Schwarzenau, as a result of their Bible study, came to a belief in adult baptism. The little society—a score of simple, uneducated working-people, men and women—were much perplexed and divided. Hochmann from his prison wrote them his opinion that those baptized in infancy needed not to be rebaptized, but the Schwarzenau people, under the leadership of Alexander Mack, believed infant baptism by sprinkling invalid, and insisted upon immersion in running water so as to imitate exactly Christ's baptism. On this point the two friends—bound together by love and reverence, by journeyings and labors and perils for the common cause—were sundered; and so sharp was the contention between them that when afterward, in Switzerland, Hochmann spoke a few words of exhortation at a meeting held by Mack, the latter abused him violently, calling him a hypocrite and an "erring spirit," to which

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Hochmann made no retort ; but after the meeting he went to Mack, embraced and kissed him and said affectionately, "When thou, dear brother, art in Heaven and seest me also enter, thou wilt be glad and will say, 'Oh, see! there cometh also our dear brother Hochmann!'" The difference between the two men seems to have arisen upon the fact that Hochmann at that time was a determined Separatist, and enjoined on all those whom he "awakened" the duty of coming out of the church ; while Mack and his Schwarzenau friends, although led by their study of the Scripture to think that baptism by immersion was an ordinance necessary to salvation, held it also indispensable that there should be an organization, a church, to administer this and other ordinances.

The son of Alexander Mack has left a sketch of the founding of the Brethren's church, in which he says :<sup>1</sup> "These eight persons covenanted and united together as brothers and sisters into a covenant of the cross of Jesus Christ to form a church of Christian believers, and when they found in authentic histories that the primitive Christians in the first and second centuries uniformly according to the command of Christ were planted into the death of Jesus Christ by three-fold immersion into the water-bath of holy baptism . . . they were anxiously desirous to use the means appointed by Christ himself . . . They therefore commanded of him who led in preaching the Word (Mack?) to immerse them . . . They concluded to unite in fasting and prayer, in order to obtain of Christ himself, the founder

<sup>1</sup> Abridged from translation in Brumbaugh's German Baptist Brethren.

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of all his ordinances, a direction and opening in this matter . . . They cast lots to determine which of the four brethren should baptize (the leader). Being thus prepared the eight went out together one morning in solitude to a stream called the Eder and the brother upon whom the lot had fallen baptized first that brother who had desired to be baptized by the church of Christ and he baptized him by whom he was baptized and the remaining three brothers and three sisters and when all had come up out of the water they were made to rejoice with great inward joyfulness . . . They were enabled to testify publicly in their meeting to the truth and the Lord granted them his special grace so that still more became obedient to the truth and thus within seven years' time there was not only a large church in Schwarzenau, but here and there in the Palatinate there were lovers of the truth and especially in Marienborn; for the church in the Palatinate was persecuted and its members then came to Marienborn; and when the church here became large, it was also persecuted. Then they collected in Crefeld where they found liberty."

That his spiritual brothers had thus decided upon the necessity of ordinances and a visible church was a great grief to Hochmann. His later years were lonely and sad. After his death his cottage fell to pieces and his grave remained unmarked until it was visited by Tersteegen, the mystic and poet, who had been converted by a spiritual son of Hochmann and therefore felt a filial interest in the gentle, loving mystic. He begged the aged Countess Hedwig, Hochmann's patroness, to

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put a stone to mark the grave and she did so on condition that Tersteegen write the inscription, which he did as follows :

“Wie Hoch is nun der Mann, der hier ein Kindlein  
gar,  
Herzinning, voller Lieb, doch auch voll Glaubens  
war,  
Von Zions Königs Pracht er zeugte und drum litte ;  
Sein Geist flog endlich hin und hier zerfiel die  
Hütte.”<sup>1</sup>

Years after Hochmann's death, Stephen Koch, leading a hermit's life in the Pennsylvania wilderness, saw in a vision a “beautiful man” who conducted the hermit to the heavenly Jerusalem. This “lovely man” was Hochmann. And when sixty years had passed since Hochmann's earthly tabernacle fell to earth, Jung Stilling, the friend of Goethe, made the mystic the hero of his novel “Theobald.”

The newly-founded church also introduced the rite of foot-washing, and the love-feast, an ordinary meal eaten before the communion which is observed in the evening,—thus in every way endeavoring to imitate exactly the administration of these acts by Christ. The liberty which the Crefeld congregation found was not of long duration. Persecution soon arose ; several young brethren were arrested and imprisoned at Gulch for four years,

<sup>1</sup> How high is now the man, who once was like a child,  
Sincere and full of love yet also full of faith,  
Of Zion's Kingdom's fame he spoke and suffered for it.  
His spirit rose to it and here decays the hut.

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and Christian Libe, one of the most zealous and eloquent of the new church's evangelists, was arrested while preaching in Basel, imprisoned, and on his refusal to renounce his faith, sent to the galleys, "and had to work the galling oar among malefactors."<sup>1</sup> The church in Schwarzenau was so bitterly persecuted that they fled, under the leadership of Mack, to Friesland.

Unfortunately the brave and eloquent Libe, who suffered for the church, was not as charitable as he was zealous. One of the members of his Crefeld congregation married a Mennonite girl; Libe, against the advice of the other elder, Peter Becker, excommunicated the erring brother. Becker and the party of charity who adhered to him decided to leave Germany, and so in 1719 the first Dunker congregation came to America and founded the Germantown church, served by Becker.<sup>2</sup> Ten years after this, Alexander Mack brought over his refugee congregation from Friesland.

On Mack's arrival he found a sad state of affairs among the Dunkers in America. A "root of bitterness" had sprung up to trouble them and this root was Conrad Beissel. Beissel was a baker by trade, the orphan child of a poor, drunken baker in the Palatinate. Knocked about from pillar to post in his youth, gay and careless, fond of fiddling and dancing, he was suddenly converted—by the direct work of God without human instrumentality, he averred—and became a zealous

<sup>1</sup> Mack's Historical Sketch, before cited.

<sup>2</sup> Libe afterwards married out of meeting himself, demitted the ministry and his church died out.

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Pietist. Rivals had him arrested in Heidelberg and banished on a charge of non-conformity. He took refuge in the Wittgenstein region where no religious opinion, however extraordinary, was persecuted. Thence, with two companions, he came to Pennsylvania, that "Pella of the sects," as Pastorius called it, and went to the wilds of Conestoga, then the frontier, where he was found by Peter Becker and other Brethren while on a missionary tour, and here with others he was baptized.

It seemed wise to Becker to leave this magnetic and zealous young convert in charge of the infant congregation thus formed at Conestoga; in reality nothing could have been more unwise. Beissel soon began to teach new doctrine; first the obligation to keep the seventh day as the Sabbath; then the superior sanctity of the celibate state; next he came to regard his Dunker baptism as invalid and he and his brother hermits re-baptized themselves. He had gathered several converts to his monastic views and among the first whom he baptized were Israel Eckerlin and Christopher Saur. Two young girls, Anna and Maria Eicher, desired to enter his semi-monastic community and with these adherents, Beissel having resigned his leadership of the Dunker congregation at Conestoga, the New World monastery and convent of Ephrata was organized. Beissel's most noted converts in the next few years were Conrad Weiser and Peter Miller.

As soon as Mack landed, he came to the assistance of Becker against this fanatical and schismatic movement; but his efforts to stem the tide were of little avail



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His own son, Alexander Mack, Jr., was for a time an inmate of Ephrata under the name of Brother Sander; and in 1738-9 a large number of Dunkers from the Germantown congregation defected to Beissel. This conflict no doubt shortened and saddened the life of Alexander Mack; he could not know, as we now do, that Beissel's community would be but a passing wonder and would die with its founder, while the Church of the Brethren would remain until the present time.

The character and fate of the various converts mentioned is instructive as showing the influence of Ephrata upon all sorts and conditions of men. Saur's connection with the community was brief and unhappy. His wife, under Beissel's instruction, left her husband and became an inmate of the convent as Sister Marcella: Saur then departed from Lancaster County and returned to Germantown.

Conrad Weiser, also an early convert, was the son of one of the "poor Palatines" sent over by Queen Anne to her colony of New York. After much ill-treatment and suffering there, they fled through the wilderness from Schoharie to Tulpehocken in Pennsylvania. A few years after this emigration, young Weiser, who had lived among the Indians in New York and knew their language well, came to Pennsylvania, fell under Beissel's influence, was baptized and for a time proved a very zealous missionary of the Ephrata faith. Two of his children entered the society, the daughter, Madlina, dying in the convent. But Weiser soon had opportunity given him through one of his old Indian friends to



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become interpreter for the province of Pennsylvania, and "allowed himself to be taken up in the world." He became Indian interpreter "so that the country could neither make peace nor wage war with the Indians without him," and formally resigned from the Ephrata community, sending a sharp letter of reproof to them concerning the tyranny and spiritual pride which he found in the community.

At the same period of Beissel's opening ministry there was taken into his community the first representative of a family which was to do great things for Ephrata and suffer hard things from the Beisselian party in it;—this was the Eckerlin family. They were Pietists, children of a well-to-do tradesman, a Rathsherr, of Strasburg, who had taken refuge from church persecution in the safe haven of Schwarzenau. After his death his widow and four sons came to Germantown, whither presently the rest of the family came. Israel first, then the other sons and the mother went to Conestoga to be under Beissel's spiritual care. All the sons finally entered the monastery. They were active exhorters and missionaries and suffered imprisonment for the doctrine they propagated. Finally Israel, as Brother Onesimus, became prior of the monastery. He was a fine business man and under him the community grew rich. It maintained five different kinds of mills, bought all the farms for two miles around, and, in short, made Ephrata a proverb for industry. Beissel, in a fit of pique, once resigned to Brother Onesimus the headship of the community, but was both surprised and disgusted when his resignation was accepted. With the

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aid of Brother Jaebez, the Eckerlin family were at last driven out from Ephrata and went "four hundred miles into the wilderness," to New River in the present West Virginia. There Indians fell upon them, took the Eckerlins prisoners and destroyed the nascent hermitage; and the ultimate fate of the brothers is not certainly known but it is thought they died in a convent in France.

The ally of Beissel in his reassertion of authority, Peter Miller—"Brother Jaebez"—is an extraordinary instance of Beissel's occult power over the hearts and minds of men. Miller, the son of a Palatine clergyman, a graduate of Heidelberg University, came to this country to be a missionary of the Reformed church in the Pennsylvania forests. At his examination and ordination by the presbytery of Philadelphia they pronounced him "an extraordinary person for sense and learning." Yet this devout and learned young clergyman, when sent to the wilds of Conestoga, was so fascinated by the former baker and present hermit that he entered the Cloister, became Beissel's most devout adherent and finally succeeded after "Father Friedsam's" death, to the position of "superintendent" of Ephrata.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In its palmy days Ephrata had not only mills and farms, but schools in which Latin was so well taught that its graduates were able to correspond with their monastic teachers in that language. Brother Obed, who was the teacher of the day school there, established a Sunday School in Ephrata, forty years before Robert Raikes, in which Obed's daughter, Sister Petronella, a beautiful and lovable girl, was the first woman Sunday-School teacher on record. The arts of ornamental writing and illumination flourished in the Cloister, and a unique music, described as being of an unearthly beauty, was invented and practised under Beissel's personal supervision. The monks set up a press of their own, upon which, under the

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But the Ephrata community, its leaders and its spirit, have always attracted a disproportionate amount of attention in religious history ; a far better representative of the spirit of Dunker Separatism is the Saur family, father and son, and their work for German culture. When the elder Saur, taking his only child with him, left the Conestoga home which had been broken up by "Sister Marcella's" withdrawal to the convent, he began in Germantown a small printing business. This, under Saur's energetic and competent management, became the largest business of the kind in Pennsylvania. Saur himself was probably a member of the Dunker communion. Being asked by brethren to found a press and disseminate Dunker literature, he, after several false starts, succeeded in getting type and a press which had been discarded by the printers of the famous Separatist edition of the Bible called, from its place of publication, the "Berleburg Bible." The edition of the Scripture distributed from the famous pietistic institutions founded by Francke at Halle was the popular one with church people and Saur was the American agent for both the Berleburg and Halle Bibles ; he also dealt in the famous medicines supplied from Halle and in general carried on a business as various as that which was conducted at the same time by Benjamin Franklin. Saur's first inde-

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scholarly Brother Jaebez, they printed many books, pamphlets and broadsides, consisting of Mennonite and Dunker religious books, Beissel's works, the hymns of the Cloister, and last but not least, the immense and magnificent Martyr Book of the Mennonites, a massive folio of fifteen hundred pages, the largest book printed during Colonial times in Pennsylvania.

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pendent publication was the hymn book of the Ephrata cloister, the "Weyrauchs Hügel," or Hill of Incense. The blasphemous adulation of Beissel in this work offended Saur, who had of course private reasons for a hatred of "the superintendent," and led to the setting up of the Ephrata press to print their own literature. The party at the convent which was opposed to Beissel rallied around Saur, and several of the Ephrata Brothers, who were experienced in such matters, assisted Saur with his first attempts at printing. Conrad Weiser helped him buy paper from Franklin, who had all the printing paper in the province in his control. But Saur did not long need help. He presently began the publication of a newspaper, an almanac, and in 1745 printed the first Bible published in this country in a European tongue—the great "Germantown Bible," a monument of typography only excelled by the Ephrata edition of the "Blütige Schauplatz." No wonder that when the last sheet was printed, Saur burst into the pious exclamation, "Dank Gott, es ist vollbracht!" ("Thank God, it is finished!")

Beside the Scriptures, more than two hundred other works proceeded from his press; and he is justly entitled to the commendation of being "easily the foremost sower of good seed in colonial America."<sup>1</sup> He lived up to the motto of his press, which was posted in a conspicuous place in the printing house: "Zur Ehre Gottes und des Nächstens Bestes."<sup>2</sup> Most of his work, and

<sup>1</sup> Brumbaugh's "Brethren," p. 374.

<sup>2</sup> To the Glory of God and the Good of our Neighbor.

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in particular the publication of the Bible, was done amid the opposition and vilification of those, both clergymen and laymen, who disliked Saur's separatistic opinions.

For "the good of his neighbor" the old printer, three years before his death, addressed to Governor Denny two long epistles<sup>1</sup> pleading for the deliverance of the poor German immigrants from the plundering and oppression of the shipmasters who brought them over and in whose vessels the horrors of the slave-traders' middle passage were rivaled, but it is not known that the appeal produced any result.

When the elder Saur died, in 1751, his son of the same name took upon himself the burden of the press. Christopher Saur, Jr., had been deprived of a mother's care in his youth;—it was not until 1744, after twelve years' residence in the Ephrata cloister, that Sister Marcella yielded, probably to her son's entreaties, and returned to her husband's home in Germantown. But Christopher had the advantage of a most excellent teacher, the pious Mennonite school-master, Christopher Dock, whose beautiful character is still, after more than one hundred and fifty years, redolent of the odor of sanctity. So grateful was young Saur for this teaching, that he induced his old instructor to write a little account of his method of teaching school, and after overcoming the Mennonite's pious scruples about securing praise of men, won from him the little tract<sup>2</sup> which has preserved for future generations a description of one

<sup>1</sup> See Brumbaugh, p. 376 et seq. for the letters.

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted in Pennypacker's Historical and Biographical Essays.

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of the best colonial schools and school-masters. This was the first book on education printed in America.

As to the younger Saur's religious affiliations, there is not the uncertainty which affects those of his father ;— Christopher Saur was not only a member, but an elder, of the Dunker church. He is said to have been a preacher of great power, a good pastor, and so benevolent that the poor of Germantown called him the "bread father." The business which he inherited he enlarged beyond any similar enterprise in colonial America ; and the spirit with which he took it up and conducted it may be judged from the editorial, as we should now call it, with which he announced his father's death and his own assumption of the headship of the business : " I had rather indeed have earned my bread by continuing in the book binding business, and so have avoided the burden and responsibilities of a printer . . . but I find it laid upon me for God and my neighbor's sake . . . Although I am not, nor do I hope to be, so richly gifted as my father, I will nevertheless use what is given me . . . and will not allow this or that to turn me from what I believe to be right and good." <sup>1</sup>

Nobly Christopher Saur fulfilled these promises. He published the second and third editions of the Germantown Bible and the profits from the third edition being more than he expected, he printed the "Geistliches Magazin," which he distributed free to those who might be benefited by it. The contents were from his own

<sup>1</sup> Brumbaugh, p. 397.

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pen or that of Alexander Mack, Jr., or were translations of devotional works such as the English non-juror Law's "Serious Call." This was the earliest religious magazine in Pennsylvania. He followed his father's example in writing timely articles on moral and religious questions of the day ;—thus, he opposed the partaking of the Germans in the slave-trade. "This godless traffic could find," he says, "up to the present no safe footing in Pennsylvania owing to the abhorrence the Germans still have for it";<sup>1</sup> and he warns them against declining from the position held from the time of Pastorius' protest. When the Germans founded the Academy in Germantown, the younger Saur was one of the trustees, giving a subscription of £20 for himself and £50 as a memorial of his father. This form of memorial shows that the opposition of the elder Saur to the German Charity Schools project was not to education in itself, but to the ecclesiastical and political plans back of that apparently praiseworthy and innocent project.

Christopher Saur's later years and the close of his life amid exile, poverty and obloquy, belong to the story of German religious life in the Revolutionary period.

It is with mingled feelings of regret and relief that one sees the end of the Separatist period ;—regret for the picturesque, the mystical, the pious folk who are no longer the chief objects of our study ; relief that we may leave these scores of warring sects, of

<sup>1</sup> *Berichte*, February 15th, 1761, quoted by Brumbaugh.



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ignorant and narrow-minded disputants, of pathetic or wrong-headed saints and solitaries. Yet the story of the Separatists shows us people who with all their faults and mistakes knew how to work and suffer and, if need be, accept exile or death rather than surrender a jot of what they believed to be the truth of God.

NOTE.—The authorities on this part of the history are as before, Goebel's "Christliches Leben," Seidensticker's admirable publications: "Bilder aus der deutsch-pennsylvanischen Geschichte" (New York, 1885), and "Geschichte der deutschen Gesellschaft" (Philadelphia, 1876), Pennypacker's "Historical and Biographical Sketches" (Philadelphia, 1883), and "Settlement of Germantown," (Philadelphia, 1889). The Mennonite "Christian Confession of Faith" and the hymn-book "Ausbund; das ist etliche Schöne Christliche Lieder," repay examination. For the Wissahickon community Sachse's "Pietists of Provincial Pennsylvania" (Philadelphia, 1895) may be used, corrected by Seidensticker's "Bilder." There is a scholarly monograph on the Labadist Colony in Maryland in the Johns Hopkins University Studies, Vol. XVII, pp. 271—317. Brumbaugh's "History of the German Baptist Brethren," (Mount Morris, 1899), gives the best account of the Dunkers; Sachse's "Sectarians of Pennsylvania" (Philadelphia, 1899-1900) contains the result of industrious if indiscriminating collection. Sluyter and Dankers' journal has been published in translation by the Long Island Historical Society, (Memoirs, Vol. I.). The Dunker hymn-book, the "Kleine Davidische Harfenspiel," the Ephrata "Weyrauchs Hügel" and the "Chronicon Ephratense," translated by J. Max Hark (Lancaster, 1889), should be examined. Redmond Conyngham's MS. history of the Mennonites is printed in Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania, Vol. VII, p. 129. For the two Christopher Saurs, authorities are Brumbaugh's "Brethren," Seidensticker's "Bilder" and "First Century of German Printing in America" (Philadelphia, 1893) and Sachse's "Sectarians"—valuable in the order named. An examination of some imprints of the Germantown press is interesting and instructive.



## CHAPTER III

### THE CHURCH PEOPLE

THE decade of 1730-40 is sometimes distinguished as that of the emigration of the church people ; that is, the members of the two oldest German Protestant organizations, the Lutheran and Reformed bodies.<sup>1</sup> But it is a purely arbitrary date, selected more because it embraces a decade than because of any decided change in the character of the emigration at that particular time.

There had been a few "church people" mingled with the Separatists and the "sects," ever since the Falkner brothers were ordained to the Lutheran ministry from the ranks of the Wissahickon Hermits, and Peter Miller was sent to Conestoga to save the little Reformed congregation there. But from this fourth decade of the eighteenth century onward the sects outside of the "great church" (as they frequently designated the two churches taken together) and the individual Separatists no longer composed the overwhelming majority of the immigrants.

The two churches in their German home had been so like in doctrine, polity and customs of worship that a member of one could scarcely tell what were the distinctive points of his organization in respect to the other. In earlier times, it is true, there had been much

<sup>1</sup> See Pennsylvania: A primer ; Barr Ferree, (New York, 1904).

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bitterness between them, and the Reformed—always the stronger from its cradle in Zwingli's home, Switzerland, along the whole course of the Rhine—had persecuted the weaker Lutheran Church. But subsequently, with the extinction of the Protestant line in the Pfalz and the accession of the Catholic princes of the Neuburg line, all Protestants were so harried and distressed that mutual suffering drew the warring churches together. One influenced the other. The Lutheranism of the Rhine country was not so churchly as that of Luther's fatherland, Saxony; the denomination itself had not a separate existence, it was counted and subsidized under the name of the Reformed. It possessed two universities, Giessen and Strasburg, the latter city being also the capital of a country of which the Lutheran was the national church. Würtemberg, too, was a Lutheran land. But excluding these tiny countries, the Rhenish followers of the Saxon reformer were a feeble folk.

The Reformed or Calvinistic church, on the other hand, was on its native heath in the Rhine countries. The people of the Palatinate (in spite of the Catholicism of their later princes), the principalities of Zweibrücken, Nassau, Baden, Hesse, were all Reformed, not to mention the powerful influence of their Calvinistic neighbors of German Switzerland and of Holland. The greater part of the Waldenses, scattered by persecution along the whole course of the Rhine, had formally entered the Reformed church as early as 1532; the Revocation of the Edict filled all Germany after 1685 with the Huguenot refugees—there were, it is estimated, one hundred

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thousand of them who fled to this nearest of Protestant lands and the majority of them settled in the Rhineland. The Reformed church had itself borne a persecution little less severe during the devastation of the Palatinate under Louis XIV and under its own Jesuit-ridden princes ; their churches taken from them, their pastors and school-teachers unpaid in an effort to starve them into submission, the dragonnades, which had proved so effectual in France, used also here. Before this cross was removed, one-fourth of the population emigrated, some to other parts of Germany, some to America. The church under its Catholic rulers was not only oppressed but corrupted ; in the Reformed consistory which managed church affairs, simony was notorious and unashamed. Pietism was to this enfeebled and harassed church as great a blessing as to the Lutheran body under one of whose clergy it took its rise. But there was this difference ; that, while the Pietists among the Lutherans were at first a despised and persecuted sect, in the Reformed body they composed the whole church. Labadie, in his work of reviving the church, had an anticipator in Untereyck of Bremen. When the little circles for prayer and Bible study were formed, the Calvinistic Synods approved of them, and only ordered that pastors give the movement direction and oversight. Such was the history and such the character of the "church people" who began to flee to America in the first years of the eighteenth century, and who by the middle of that century composed the majority of its German immigrants. The Lutherans among them did not fol-

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low the stricter liturgical traditions of their own church ; the Reformed ones preferred free prayer and a simple worship. All were strongly pietistic in their leanings, for in this school of thought were found most of the earnest and devout souls of the state churches ; those Palatines to whom their religion was a mere external formality, could easily escape persecution by conforming to the Catholic creed of their princes. They edified themselves from the writings of Arndt, the prayer-book of Conrad Mel, Lobwasser's version of Marot's Huguenot psalms, the hymns of the great Lutheran writers and of Neander and Tersteegen. Their zeal was made more ardent by the persecution they endured from the formalists of their own churches, from Catholic rulers, or from hyper-orthodox opponents of Pietism and "enthusiasm," and that zeal was doubtless increased by the presence among them of descendants of the exiled Waldenses and of many Huguenots who had, in their own persons, borne dragonnades, plundering, exile, imprisonment and the galleys rather than give up their faith. They were narrow minded, our early German fathers,—ignorant, unaccustomed to participation in the government of either church or state ; but those who made up their minds to leave their "dear German-land"<sup>1</sup> stood for the more energetic and forceful elements, and so, as in the New England emigration, "God sifted a whole nation that he might send choice grain over into this wilderness."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pastorius' ode in the Germantown records, translated by Whittier.

<sup>2</sup> "Delivered in a sermon preached at Boston in New England, April 29th, 1668," by the Rev. Wm. Stoughton.

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Both the Lutheran and Reformed churches, though early planted on these shores, fell into neglect, and in the lack of clergy were obliged to depend for the shepherding of their earliest congregations upon pious and zealous laymen. Often the first movement toward gathering a church was given by the activity of a sectarian leader in the neighborhood. Thus Tempelman, the Calvinistic school-master who founded a congregation in Conestoga, was impelled thereto by Beissel's efforts in the same region. The earliest emigration not impelled by religious persecution, the great exodus of Queen Anne's time, was chiefly of the Reformed people, and those among these hapless refugees who settled in New York State, coming under the care of the Dutch Reformed church there, finally were absorbed in it. Two German missionaries, Haeger and Oehl, who had received Episcopal ordination in London, tried to detach the Germans from the faith of their fathers, but without success. De Graffenried's colony at New Berne had a Reformed clergyman for chaplain; but the church he founded was absorbed by the Presbyterians. At the same date there came to Pennsylvania a Swiss Reformed minister, the Rev. Samuel Guldin, who having fallen under the suspicion of being a Pietist, had been interdicted from preaching in Berne and banished to a country parish. He then left Switzerland, came to Germantown and preached there and in the surrounding country during all the rest of his long life, confining himself, however, to this evangelistic work and not attempting to organize any churches.

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The organization of new churches fell to the hands of a pious school-master, John Philip Boehm, the son of a Reformed clergyman of Hesse. Coming to Pennsylvania in 1720, he began services as a lay "reader," was besought with tears by the elder, Henry Antes, to minister to their congregation, and although at first refusing because he had not been ordained, he finally consented, "protesting before God that he could not justify his refusal of so necessary a work." About the same time and in the same way Conrad Tempelman, a pious layman, a tailor by trade, founded some congregations near Boehm's mission. Subsequently Boehm was ordained (by the Dutch Reformed), after some friction with a young and over-zealous minister, George Michael Weiss, who, although he was pronounced by Jedidiah Andrews "a bright young man and a fine scholar," seems to have lacked discretion and brotherly charity in dealing with the conditions of a new country and the limitations of his earnest, if irregular, fellow-laborer. Presently the Rev. John Peter Miller, scholarly, pious and regularly ordained by the presbytery of Philadelphia, was sent to minister at Conestoga. We have seen how this ended—in Beissel's conversion of Miller and the entry of "Brother Jaebez" into the Ephrata cloister. Then Henry Antes, "the pious Reformed elder of Falkner's Swamp," tried to start a Union movement which should embrace all religious people, but this ended in taking Antes into the Moravian body. So that all was confusion, feebleness and discouragement among the few Reformed in the province of Pennsylvania, and they

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were more numerous there than in any other American province.

Their petitions to Europe for ministers and particularly for a superintendent had been unheeded. At length the Fathers in Holland procured a young Swiss-German, Michael Schlatter, who was willing to go to Pennsylvania and endeavor to bring order out of confusion. He was young, energetic, fond of travel, of good family and education. Before completing his education at St. Gall he had attended the Dutch and German universities, and appeared just the man for the place. Schlatter started for America in June, 1746, meeting on the way with pirates and perils of shipwreck. He had expected not to take a congregation, but the religious destitution among the Reformed so appealed to him that he accepted the pastorate of the Philadelphia and Germantown charges, serving without salary for the first year—"in order," he says, "that by deeds I might convince them that I did not serve them merely for the sake of my bread." With immense energy and devotion he set about the work of visiting the congregations, organizing them properly, ordaining unordained laborers like Tempelman, procuring new ministers from Europe, straightening out the involved accounts of several benevolent funds and finally organizing a general body, the Coetus or Synod. In his journeys he went not only through and through Pennsylvania but to Maryland, Virginia, and frequently to New York City, also regularly ministering to congregations in New Jersey. His course was not unvexed by quarrels, and even a trial before a



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civil court to determine the ownership of a church building; there were many differences in the infant coetus over doctrinal points, the moral and intellectual characteristics of ministers, etc., but the later meetings became more harmonious.

In 1751 Schlatter went over to Europe and represented the cause of the poor and struggling Reformed Church of Pennsylvania to the rich Calvinists of Holland; he also went to Switzerland and the Palatinate in search of ministerial candidates who might go to Pennsylvania, but found none who were willing. He then addressed himself to the university of Herborn (in reality only a high school with a small but learned and pious faculty) which sent six young men back with Schlatter to provide the German Reformed with clerical ministrations. Herborn was strongly pietistic in its spirit—"the churchly Pietism of the Reformed of Germany." (Good: German Reformed Church in U. S. p. 404.) Schlatter had scarcely reached America with his six young ministers, when he fell into trouble with his fellow clergymen; a rival coetus was set up under the presidency of Weiss, Boehm's former opponent, and Schlatter again returned to Europe. There he resigned his home-missionary superintendency under the Holland deputies and was probably very glad to be employed by a new society—organized in London by the tireless efforts of the Rev. David Thomson, an English Presbyterian pastor at Amsterdam—for "the propagation of the knowledge of God among the Germans." About the same time that Schlatter was in London, there came thither the Rev. Wm. Smith, provost



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of the University of Pennsylvania, an energetic and enthusiastic man who sometimes let his zeal outrun his discretion. In a "Brief History of the Charitable Scheme for the Relief and Instruction of Poor Germans,"<sup>1</sup> which he published on Franklin's press the year after his arrival, Mr. Smith showed that he knew nothing of the schools which had previously been established in connection with the German churches, nor of the condition of the frontier Germans, who were neither "exposed an easy prey to the total ignorance of their Savage Neighbors on the one Hand, or the Corruptions of our Jesuitical Enemies on whom they border, on the other hand."<sup>2</sup> The notion that the Germans might become Indians because they were exposed to the incursions and alarms of Indian war parties, or would likely conspire with the French to escape whose devastations most of them had come, would have been ridiculous had not the consequences of the misapprehension been so serious, both for Schlatter and the schools.

A powerful opponent, too, was raised up against them in the person of old Christopher Saur, who thundered against the project in his newspaper as well as in private letters, and although the American trustees did their best to counteract it, even using some of their funds to start an opposition press and paper, Saur's vast influence with the "sect people"—especially the Dunkers—could not

<sup>1</sup> "A Brief History of the Rise and Progress of the Charitable Scheme carrying on by a Society of Noblemen and Gentlemen in London for the Relief and Instruction of Poor Germans," etc. Philadelphia, Franklin and Hall, 1755.

<sup>2</sup> p. 6, Brief History.

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be counteracted. Saur saw, or thought he saw, an endeavor to influence the peace sects among the Germans to elect to the Assembly men who would vote money for a militia, frontier forts and other defences against the Indians, with whom the province, after the defeat of Braddock, was just beginning to have its first troubles. To be sure, the Germans on the frontier, among whom these schools would chiefly be established, were by no means non-resistants, but fought doughtily under the leadership of Conrad Weiser for the defence of their little log-huts and clearings. Saur, however, was able to prejudice many against the plan, and in a few years the zeal of the English contributors declined, money ceased to come in and the Charity School project fell into ruin. Schlatter, during the declining years of the project, sought and obtained a chaplaincy in the Royal American Regiment recruited from among the Pennsylvania Germans by Col. Henry Bouquet, and in his military capacity accompanied the regiment to the capture of Louisburg; subsequently he went with the gallant Bouquet to Pittsburg in 1764.

At the close of his army life, Schlatter retired to a little farm in the vicinity of Philadelphia, where he died in 1790. After his dismissal to take charge of the unlucky Charity-School project, he never resumed the connection with the coetus which he had founded, and the German Reformed church, in Pennsylvania where it was strongest and proportionately in the more southern colonies of Maryland and Virginia, suffered for want of the energetic and capable supervision which he had at

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one time given it. In New York, as we have seen, the Germans united with the Dutch Reformed, while in the middle and southern provinces, as in the case of the Reformed church at New Berne, they were largely taken up into the Presbyterian fold, or, where there were Union churches, they threw in their lot with their better-shepherded Lutheran brethren.

The Lutherans had been in as bad a state as the Reformed ever were ; for years nearly all the work among them in Pennsylvania was done by one man, John Caspar Stoeber. The Kocherthal colony, forerunners of the large emigration under Queen Anne's patronage, was brought over to the province of New York under the leadership of a Lutheran pastor, Joshua von Kocherthal. During the first winter in the new land dissensions broke out among them ; some of the colony were accused by others of being Pietists, and, to his great bewilderment, the English Governor was requested to withdraw rations from the misbelievers. He, not knowing what a Pietist was, sent a commission to inquire into the matter. This and other things discouraged Kocherthal who returned to England for assistance. There he encountered the large body of Palatine refugees encamped near London, and came back on the same ship with three thousand of them. These refugees were finally settled along the Hudson, at Rhinebeck, New Paltz and other localities, and Kocherthal ministered among them until his death in 1719.

But some years before the coming of Kocherthal's colony or that of Queen Anne's poor Palatines, the

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church in New York City had secured the services of the Rev. Justus Falkner, who with his brother Daniel had left the Hermit community of the Wissahickon and gone into the Lutheran ministry. Justus Falkner was a devout and devoted clergyman. For twenty years he ministered not only to the city congregation but in the summer went as far as Albany, visiting the scattered Lutherans, preaching and administering the sacraments. Frequently after a baptismal record, he would add a short prayer for the spiritual welfare of the child, as for instance, "Lord! Lord, let this child be and remain engrossed upon the book of life through Jesus Christ. Amen." "Bless, O Lord, this child also with everlasting happiness through Jesus Christ. Amen." On the baptism of a negro child, "Lord, merciful God, who lookest not upon the person, but from whom different creatures that fear thee and do right find favor, let this child be clothed in the white robe of innocence and righteousness and so remain through the grace of Christ, the savior of all mankind. Amen." And when a Carolina Indian slave was baptized by the name of Thomas Christian, Falkner prayed, "That the Lord would henceforth cause this unbelieving *Thomas* to become a believing *Christian*." Falkner's useful and pious life ended in 1723; his successor, Berkenmeyer, who married a daughter of Pastor Kocherthal, also ministered in Albany and up and down the Hudson. Later the colonists at Schoharie had a minister of their own, Sommer, who served the Germans, by this time spread along the Mohawk, "making it for fifty miles a

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German stream." He had preaching places at Palatine Bridge, Stone Arabia and other settlements of that region, serving with unwearied diligence and a simple heroism which has won the admiration of the secular and unsympathetic historian Kapp.

In the south there were German congregations at many of the early settlements such as Frederica and Purysburg, but it is often impossible to decide whether they were Lutheran or Reformed—a fact which has been a greater grief to denominational historians than to anyone else. Probably the poor and alien colonists were too glad to secure occasional services in their native tongue to be very critical as to the ecclesiastical connection of their preacher. In South Carolina the Germans had been settled in the State for more than sixty years before the first German minister, the Rev. John Ulrich Geissendanner, came to the Orangeburg district. He died shortly after his arrival and his successor,—who was his namesake and nephew,—presently secured the Episcopal ordination, and both pastor and congregation passed into that church. This was the history of many congregations in South Carolina. At Saxe Gotha the first Reformed minister there found a weird sect called the Weberites, which had arisen out of prayer meetings held by a few ignorant Swiss people. For a time they read the Scripture, prayed and edified each other as well as they could, but presently the leader, Jacob Weber, began to have revelations to the effect that he was a divine incarnation and that a certain neighbor was Satan, who must be destroyed; so Weber and others of the

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sect smothered their supposed devil to death under a feather bed. For this crime Weber was executed, leaving a pathetic confession which shows him to have been a sincere but deluded man—probably suffering from religious insanity. The church at Charleston was almost the only flourishing one in South Carolina and from there some missionary work was done among the destitute people further up the State; after the German settlement in the Orangeburg and neighboring districts increased, several pastors came thither from the Charleston church. This church, St. John's by name, had its own troubles, although during the pastorate of Martin they were wealthy and benevolent enough to form a "German Society" for the care and help of poor emigrants. At one time they procured a student to serve as vicar to their feeble minister—a young man who arrived without his trunk, which he said had been stolen from him in Holland. A benevolent elder paid his passage and bought him clothes, the old minister examined, ordained and installed him, also "marrying him, on his sickbed, to one of his own daughters besides giving him the necessary books and skeletons of sermons." More than this seems to have been "necessary" to make a creditable minister out of the young man, for presently we find Mühlenberg—who had been called in as usual when any Lutheran church anywhere was in trouble—saying, "when a minister makes himself familiar with drunkards, flourishes with his sword at night along the streets, throws stones at windows, etc., and his wife frequents the theater at night, leads in the dance at

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weddings, etc., we can easily imagine what impression this must make." They finally recalled the Rev. Mr. Martin, a self-taught man, ordained by the Ebenezer pastors, but who served them faithfully until his patriotism caused him to be exiled from the city by the British troops in the Revolution.

The story of Lutherans in North Carolina is much more encouraging than the forlorn tale of the southern province; and this is largely because the immigration there was from Pennsylvania and the churches of various denominations were generally supported from the north. One group of churches in Western North Carolina, however, sought and obtained help from Germany. It is an unusual story; two little churches of the Lutheran faith had been organized: St. John's in Mecklenburg County, and Zion's, commonly known as "Organ Church" because it alone of all its sister churches possessed such an instrument. Failing in their application to Pennsylvania for ministers, they sent two elders to Europe to apply to the Lutheran consistory of Hannover for help, and received not only grants of money, but the services of two faithful missionaries, Adolph Nussman, a very learned and devoted man, a converted Franciscan monk, and Gottfried Arndt, at first a school-teacher but afterwards ordained. These two, undeterred by the disturbances of the Revolution which cut off temporarily their German subventions, labored for fifteen years all through western North Carolina, and planted churches in the whole region west of the Catawba river.



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Except "old Guldi," who only preached occasionally, there was not a single ordained minister of either church in Pennsylvania until 1717. It was the work of pastors Boehm and Stoever a little later on that saved the Reformed and Lutheran churches.<sup>1</sup> John Caspar Stoever was the son of a Lutheran pastor of the same name from Strasburg, who, having ministered for years to a struggling congregation at Germanna, Governor Spotswood's village in Virginia, went abroad to procure help for them, died and was buried at sea on his return voyage. The son was not ordained—there being no one to perform it in America at that time—but he did an almost incredible amount of work among the Lutherans of Pennsylvania, itinerating for years through the rural parts of the province from his home in New Hanover; later he removed to Lancaster, whence he went to the verge of settlement beyond the Susquehanna, founding churches and ministering at the Codorus and Conewago settlements, not yet called "York" and "Hanover." Later he removed to Quitapohilla, "the Snake's Hole"—now Lebanon—still following the frontier and the rude, hardy German pioneers. At Lebanon, it is said, pastor Stoever used to carry his gun with him on all his journeys, and even into the pulpit, yet he went to his York congregation on the other side of the Susquehanna regularly once a month for ten years. About this time he succeeded in obtaining ordination. He had his faults; perhaps he was, as Mühlenberg told the Halle fathers, hot-headed and censorious. He was not inclined to

<sup>1</sup> Schmauk, *Lutheran Church in Pennsylvania*, p. 221.



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Pietism and when Mühlenberg, the new superintendent, came fresh and zealous from Halle, the old frontiersman-preacher probably received him with little courtesy and gratitude ; but the Halle Reports do scant justice to his heroic work. “ He endured more hardships with much more equanimity than Mühlenberg ; the material side of things doubtless had a large degree of interest and charm for him ; he insisted on orthodoxy strenuously and even violently and he lacked the deeper spiritual sense, the inner spring of piety which Mühlenberg possessed.” But with all, Stoever did a great, noble, and unappreciated work.

He was involved in the distressing and disgraceful affair known as the Tulpehocken Confusion, when the two parties of Lutherans and the Moravians struggled for years about the church of Tulpehocken. In the course of this bitter dispute, Zinzendorf deposed Stoever from the ministry. A number of Germans of prominence were mixed up with this affair, which served to give it undesirable publicity. It began in the colony so heroically founded by emigrants from Schoharie, fleeing from what they thought the oppressions of the New York government. At first they were beautifully harmonious in their new Pennsylvania home ; Conrad Weiser, a man of power and intelligence, ministered to them as a Bible-reader and gave them extracts from the works of Spener and Francke. He it was, too, who urged them to send to Halle for a regularly-ordained minister. During the lengthy and eventually fruitless negotiations incident to

<sup>1</sup> Schmauk, Lutheran Church in America, p. 250.

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this matter, Weiser, who through all his busy and changeful life cherished a warm friendship for Peter Miller, the Reformed clergyman at Conestoga, was drawn with him into the Ephrata cloister. Miller said that "Wisdom drew them into her net," but as to Weiser the snare was soon broken and he escaped, saying that when they began to reject Christ and turned to the writings of Dippel the mystic instead of those of the Halle Pietists, he must give them up. Meanwhile Stoever struggled violently against the opponents of his church and himself, though in vain until Mühlenberg at last brought a minister who gave satisfaction to the distracted congregation at Tulpehocken.

Stoever's relations with Mühlenberg continued strained—neither could understand or appreciate the good in the other—but in the later years of Stoever's long life they became reconciled, insomuch that Stoever connected himself with the ministerium founded by Mühlenberg. Stoever's death took place at Quitapohilla in his seventy-fifth year. He was to administer the rite of confirmation and, not feeling well enough to go to the church, sent for the young confirmants to come to his house; there, while in the act of confirmation, he dropped dead.

We have frequently alluded to Mühlenberg;—it seems desirable to give his biography at length, for from the time of his landing in 1742 to his death in 1787 that biography is the history of the Lutheran Church in America. Henry Melchior Mühlenberg descended from a noble family of North Germany, impoverished and

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reduced by the wars of the sixteenth century. He was a graduate of the university of Göttingen, and an ardent Pietist. When on a visit to Halle, Francke asked him whether he would be willing to accept a call from America; Mühlenberg immediately answered that "if such were the will of God, he would certainly go." And go he did in a few months thereafter, arriving at Charleston, South Carolina, in the autumn of 1742. Thence he went to Ebenezer, the settlement of the pious and persecuted Salzburgers, whose welfare was always near and dear to his heart.

The story of the Salzburg exiles reads like a romance, yet it is the soberest of fact. After a persecution lasting for two hundred years, with intervals whose peace was purchased by submitting to external regulations, meeting in cellars and dens and caves of the earth, the zeal of a new archbishop finally drove them out. Twenty thousand Lutherans—giving up their homes, their property, even their children, who had been taken from them to be brought up on Catholicism—left their country in the depths of winter and went out not knowing whither they went. Yet the procession of exiles was not only a brave but a triumphant one; singing hymns, they marched through Protestant Germany everywhere received by their fellow-believers with prayers and tears and gifts. Many went to Brandenburg, where the Elector had invited them. A band of them passing through Augsburg excited the Christian sympathy of Pastor Urlsperger; writing an account of the emigration for some English friends, the interest elicited by it enabled Urlsperger to

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procure means to carry fifty families to the new colony of Georgia just then founded by Oglethorpe. Space fails to tell of their piety, their hardships, and their gratitude to God and to godly friends for this refuge provided them beyond the ocean. They settled at Ebenezer, near Savannah, under the care of two Lutheran pastors, Boltzius and Gronau, supplied them by the ever-faithful Halle Institution. There the Salzburgers lived and labored, conducting services also among some scattered Germans in their neighborhood, and there not only Mühlenberg, but the Wesleys and Whitefield had profitable intercourse with them.

Leaving the Salzburgers, Mühlenberg, after tedious delays, arrived in Philadelphia, where he found the Lutheran congregation sadly disturbed by the possibly well-meant but divisive efforts of Zinzendorf. Having settled this trouble, Mühlenberg turned to the country congregations. He fixed his residence at Providence, (the Trappe), where a church building soon took the place of the barn in which services had been conducted. He married the daughter of Conrad Weiser, now Indian Interpreter for the province, and thus allied himself to the American pioneers who had preceded him. Now began his visitation of the country congregations—feeble, scattered and distracted by the results of Moravian evangelistic zeal; presently he extended his supervision, as did Schlatter, to Maryland and Virginia, and where, along the Monocacy and the Shenandoah Valleys, the tide of Pennsylvania-German emigration, re-enforced from the Fatherland, was pouring a flood. Like the

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emigration from Germany which had peopled Pennsylvania, this was led by the sects—Dunkers and Mennonites—but now the church people were following in their wake. Mühlenberg paid several visits to New York, both to the city and the province, and also to New Jersey. The feeble and scattered Lutherans of the Carolinas claimed his attention, when after the middle of the eighteenth century Pennsylvania-German emigration reached so far. The eccentric Hartwig, the pioneer preacher of New York, was a friend and guest of Mühlenberg. Hartwig was once called to the little knot of Germans who, plundered and deserted, had been cast on the Maine coast at Waldoboro, but he was unable to accept and the shepherding of this flock was left largely to the Moravians. Even as far as Nova Scotia, the German colony of Lunenburg looked to Mühlenberg for aid and, on the advice of Schlatter, called him to become their pastor.

This brings into notice the brotherly and broad-minded charity of his relations with other bodies of Christians. He was intimate with the Swedish Lutheran Wrangel, whose position in his own communion was something like that of Mühlenberg among the Germans; he maintained friendship with Michael Schlatter, with the Presbyterians, such as the two Tennants, Gilbert and William, with Whitefield—in short, with everyone but Zinzendorf and the Moravians. The Episcopalians were very friendly with the learned and dignified Superintendent of the Lutherans. Mühlenberg said of them: “During the thirty-two years of my sojourning in America, time and

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again occasions were given me to join the Episcopal church and to receive four or five times more salary than my poor German fellow-members of the Lutheran faith gave me; but I preferred to preach in and with my people to the Treasures in Egypt.”<sup>1</sup>

He early formed the ministers of his faith into a Synod, which presently died, but was resurrected into what is the oldest Lutheran body in America—the Ministerium. He began in a humble way a theological seminary, taking a few young candidates and training them; subsequently this infant seminary was passed over to the care of Wrangel. He formed a common liturgy from the different ones which were used, each pastor having previously conducted services according to his own ideas, or used the liturgy of the little principality from which he himself came. Mühlenberg furnished a model for a church constitution—an important matter in a denomination as strongly congregational in its leanings as is the Lutheran. In short, there is no part of the country, no province of church government, in which Mühlenberg’s hand was not busy or his influence felt. It was the superior good fortune of the church he represented to have him continue his work through the whole remainder of the Colonial period. Had he, like Schlatter, abandoned the work of supervision and the connection with his Synod just as his work of organization was well under way, the Lutherans like the Reformed might have declined and decreased and been absorbed into other bodies. It is a testimony alike to the character of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Dr. Mann’s *Life of Mühlenberg*, p. 455.

## The Church People

Mühlenberg and to the discernment of his church, that he is still revered among Lutherans of all names and races as the "Patriarch of the Lutheran Church" in America.

The last one of the "tolerated confessions" which made up the church people of Germany, the Catholic, has been passed over as so small in the Colonial period as to be beneath notice. Thus one authority says that at the opening of the Revolution there were only thirteen hundred Roman Catholics between Canada and Florida;<sup>1</sup> Seidensticker estimates the number of German Catholics in Pennsylvania at two thousand.<sup>2</sup> But in the same year that Mühlenberg received his call to America the number of German Catholics was so great that German-speaking Jesuits were sought out and sent to minister to them.

One of them, Father Schneider, a Bavarian, went to Goshenhoppen, where, by 1745, he managed to get built what Archbishop Carroll calls "a noble church." The land was sold him in a fit of pique against his own denomination by a Mennonite, who rightly judged that nothing would exasperate his brethren more. So poor was this pioneer priest that he could not buy himself a missal and therefore copied one for his own use, a volume of more than seven hundred MS. pages,—a monument alike of his piety and poverty. He was the pastor of the German Catholics in Philadelphia for many years, and his parish extended into Delaware and New Jersey, mass being celebrated at the Geiger house near Salem.

<sup>1</sup> Rise of Religious Liberty in America, Cobb, p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> Geschichte der deutschen Gesellschaft, p. 17.



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Father Schneider seems to have itinerated from Goshenhoppen as a center; his first record is of a baptism performed at a house in Falkner's Swamp, the infant's godmother being, as he notes, a Lutheran. His companion, Father Wapeler, a Westphalian by birth, was sent to the mission of Conewago (near Hanover, though in Adams County). There Wapeler erected a log-house for a chapel; after he left Conewago with health broken by the hardships of his frontier parish, he is said to have founded the church in Lancaster. Wapeler's successor, Pellentz, was also a German, as was a later laborer, Father Manners, his name being a translation from Sittensperger. From 1758 St. Joseph's church in Philadelphia had a German Jesuit stationed there who was especially charged with the direction of the German population. This was the Rev. Ferdinand Farmer, whose name affords no key to his nationality until we learn that it was in reality Steynmeyer. He had been previously at Lancaster, whence he had made journeys to "Geiger's" like his predecessor.

At the end of the Revolution—during which we must remember there was no German immigration—these preponderantly Teutonic parishes reported a total of twenty-two hundred communicants—more than have been estimated as the whole Catholic population in the United States at that time. It is not probable that there was any large, or indeed appreciable, number of Teutonic Catholics in any other colony. In New York and New England "Catholicism was virtually extinct."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Shea, *Catholic Church in Colonial Times*, p. 396.



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Many colonies, we know, had severe laws against "Papists." In Maryland, the only especially Catholic colony, Governor Calvert wrote: "I have reason to think the greater numbers of the Germans that are imported profess that religion,"<sup>1</sup> but their numbers were much over-estimated both by their friends and their enemies.

Thus, about the same year, 1740, we find the three churches, Reformed, Lutheran and Catholic, awakening to the fact that there were hundreds and thousands of Germans beyond the sea who were alike destitute and desirous of the ministrations of religion; and we see all of them organizing—sending missionaries, ordaining clergymen, supplying superintendence, books, churches,—but all of the work was pitifully inadequate to the needs of these Germans so far off in the wilderness who, like the man of Macedonia in St. Paul's vision, were calling to their brethren and fathers in Europe, "Come over and help us!"

<sup>1</sup> July 9th, 1755. See letter in Scharf's History of Maryland, Vol. I, p. 461.

NOTE.—The chief authorities which have been followed on this period are, as before, Goebel's "Christliches Leben," Good: "History of the Reformed Church in Germany" (Reading, 1894); and "History of the Reformed Church in America," by the same author (Reading, 1899); Dubbs: "Historic Manual of the Reformed Church" (Lancaster, 1885). Volume VIII of the American Church History Series on the German Reformed Church is also by Dr. Dubbs and is a valuable condensation of the above; Dr. Schmauk's excellent "History of the Lutheran Church in Pennsylvania" (publications of the Pennsylvania German Society, volume XI, part I, Lancaster, 1902), of which, unfortunately, but one volume has been published. Dr. Schmauk has incorporated in this work a partial translation of the "Hallesche Nachrichten" or Halle Reports, an invaluable

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able source of American Lutheran history. Vol. IV of the American Church History series, on the Lutheran Church, by the Rev. H. E. Jacobs, necessarily brief, may be supplemented by various local and special histories. Strobel's "History of the Salzburgers" (Baltimore, 1855), does not make the most of a fine subject; Von Reck's "Journal" (London, 1734), and the "Urksperger Nachrichten" (Halle, 1735), are well summarized by Jacobs. See also Bernheim: "History of the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina" (Philadelphia, 1872). For the Charity Schools, there are a number of different authorities; Horace W. Smith's "Life of William Smith, D.D.," gives many original documents; a copy of the "Brief History" is in the Library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society. For the German Catholics, see De Courcy's "Catholic Church in the United States," translated by J. G. Shea (New York, 1856); Shea's "Catholic Church in Colonial Times" (New York, 1886); Cobb: "Rise of Religious Liberty in America" (New York, 1892).

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MORAVIANS

As in the case of Mühlenberg, the names of the Moravians and their leader, Zinzendorf, have been mentioned in these pages before any extended explanation or history of the movement was given. Like other movements in the religious life of the German colonists, it showed itself most prominently in that distracted decade, when, as the Ephrata chronicler says: "Many were driven into such straits that they knew not what to believe."

The history of the Moravian church, or the *Unitas Fratrum*, as they should be called, is a long and intensely interesting one, dating in its beginning from the movement begun by Huss, though not ended with his death. When the Hussite wars came to an end in the utter exhaustion of both parties, persecution forced them into a separate existence; but they secured an episcopate—procuring ordination from a bishop of the Waldenses—and in Luther's time had a church of 200,000 members, a confession of faith, catechism and hymn-book—the latter the earliest Protestant work of the sort. Persecution under Ferdinand II almost blotted them out at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War; in Poland they coalesced with the Reformed, in Moravia they secretly preserved the doctrine and usages of "the Unity";—

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this is called in Moravian parlance the time of the Hidden Seed. "God searched out two extremes of society for his agents in the resuscitation of this almost extinct evangelical church : a count and a carpenter."<sup>1</sup>

The carpenter was Christian David. Giving himself to the work of an evangelist, he came in contact with the Hidden Seed and assured them of a refuge on the estate of a certain pious Saxon count. This was Nicholas Ludwig, Count of Zinzendorf, not to mention other titles, whose grandfather had emigrated from Austria, "esteeming the loss of all his estates more than counter-balanced by the superior liberty of conscience which he thus obtained."<sup>2</sup>

The youthful count had been brought up by his grandmother, a pious but somewhat stern and arbitrary lady, whose strict discipline seems not to have shadowed the loving, joyful piety of her grandchild. After studies at Halle—where the Pietist authorities tormented him to produce a sufficiently gloomy "conviction of sin"—and travels over the continent, receptions at various courts and religious conversations wherever he went, the young nobleman married a daughter of the noble house of Reuss and settled upon an estate called Berthelsdorf, withdrawing himself as often as possible from his court employments at Dresden to perform the duties of a village catechist and school-master at his country estate.

Here he gave refuge to the Moravian exiles and also

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton's *Moravians* ; American Church History series, vol. 8, p. 433.

<sup>2</sup> Latrobe's preface to Spangenberg's *Life of Zinzendorf*, p. 6. English translation and abridgment by Samuel Jackson.

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to the little Protestant sect of the Schwenkfelders, founded by a contemporary of Luther and existing ever since under more or less persecution, until the existing Catholic house of Hapsburg so annoyed them by Jesuit missionaries that they, like Zinzendorf's forefathers, left the Austrian dominions and took refuge in Saxony.

After a time Zinzendorf was gradually drawn nearer and nearer to the Moravian brethren whose colony, named Herrnhut (the protection of the Lord), was meanwhile augmented by a constant influx of refugees. The count finally received ordination as a Lutheran clergyman, after explanations, petitions and appeals to the various powers that were in the Germany of his time, as though he had purposed some terrible crime in his evangelistic aims. But neither his rank, his high connections, nor his blameless intentions could save him long. Presently he was ordered by the Saxon government to sell his estates, then banished, and after a time permitted to return; then he was forbidden longer to give shelter to the Schwenkfelders. In anticipation of a final exile, Zinzendorf endeavored to provide some place of refuge, and four Moravian colonies were projected in various parts of the world. One of these was to be in Oglethorpe's colony, Georgia, whither Zinzendorf directed the Schwenkfelders, having succeeded in obtaining land in that State, and a free passage thither. But on arriving at Haarlem the Schwenkfelders met with friends who arranged for them instead to proceed to Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Schwenkfelders arrived in Pennsylvania September 24, 1734,

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The tract in Georgia thus abandoned by the Schwenkfelders was taken up by the Moravians, who sent a few brethren to occupy it. Meantime, the long impending blow had fallen in Herrnhut. The Count received his sentence of banishment, and although he was subsequently permitted to revisit Herrnhut, he had henceforth "no continuing city," but spent the remainder of his life in evangelistic journeys over the Continent, England, the West Indies, and America. "His state of pilgrimage," says Spangenberg, "commenced with this, and only ter-

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which has ever since been observed by the sect as their "Memorial Day," with religious services lasting all day; between the morning and afternoon services they partake of a meal of bread, butter, and apple-butter, whence the familiar name of the occasion—"Apple-butter Day." For many years after their arrival the Schwenkfelders refrained from anything which resembled an organized church with services and preachers, having on this, as well as other subjects, views singularly akin to those of the Quakers. They were always zealous for education, industrious, highly honorable in their dealings, and very charitable. Their young people were instructed largely by the means of copying Schwenkfeld's works by hand, and numerous volumes of these manuscripts written and bound by the members of the sect are still extant. They early instituted a habit of correspondence with religious friends in Germany, and of these letters, often beautifully written and composed, as many as thirty or forty were prepared in a single year. At the end of our period, in 1782, they finally adopted a constitution composed by their minister Schultz; before this, many of the sect strayed into various opinions, several being earnest students of Boehme and his English disciple, Jane Leade. Spangenberg lived a good while at the house of Christopher Wiegner, one of the sect, having been sent there by Zinzendorf to look after the welfare of these religious refugees in the new world. At this time he wrote: "As to my outward occupation it is at present farm work; but this is as much blessed to my soul as formerly my studying and writing, for whatever is done by the blessing of God thereby becomes good." Spangenberg grew so fond of the Schwenkfelders that Zinzendorf declared he had become one of the sect.

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minated with his life.”<sup>1</sup> At the time of his banishment, Zinzendorf finally received Moravian ordination as a Bishop of the Brethren’s Unity. At the same time, while on a visit to Denmark, his attention being called to foreign missions as a duty of the church, the first of the far-famed Moravian missions—that to the negroes of the West Indies—was begun. The Georgia settlement was largely kept up from a desire to teach the Indians there, but various hindrances—lack of obedience on the part of the missionaries sent there, the impossibility of access to the Indians, and, finally, threatenings of war—led to its discontinuance. Meanwhile, “the banished count” had gone with his “pilgrim congregation” to Marienborn in the Wetterau, always a refuge for those persecuted either for righteousness or fanaticism’s sake.<sup>2</sup> Here at Herrnhag was the center of the Moravian church, and here the Count made his home whenever he was not on some religious journey, and all his journeys were religious. Presently he went to St. Thomas, to see the progress of

<sup>1</sup> Life of Zinzendorf, translated by Jackson. The type of religious life which Zinzendorf and the Moravian Brethren finally developed was not at all mystical, it was rather pietistic; but it was a reaction from the gloom and narrowness of some later Pietism. It was a religion of peace and joy, of enthusiasm, of warm love to God, and helpfulness to our neighbor. This type, no longer concerned with orthodoxy of belief, nor with mystical visions and ecstasies, but with helping men to realize the love of Christ to them and to show forth that love to their fellowmen, produced Moravian evangelistic endeavors—their home missions, the Diaspora work among the members of the European State churches, and their glorious and self-sacrificing foreign missions: all were a part of the same movement and motivated by the same loving zeal.

<sup>2</sup> It will be remembered that the Dunkers had one of their earliest congregations at Marienborn twenty years before.



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the mission there, and thence to the Continent of North America. He was accompanied on this journey by one member of his family, the Countess Benigna, his eldest daughter, a vigorous and devoted girl of sixteen. Zinzendorf's interest had been much aroused by accounts of the religious destitution suffered by the German colonists in America,—accounts given him by George Whitefield, the English evangelist, at that time a warm friend and admirer of the Moravians, with whose society in Fetter Lane he frequently met.

Zinzendorf had sent to Pennsylvania a Moravian brother, Andrew Eschenbach, who had begun labors at Oley (now Berks County). Whitefield, also, finding the distressed condition of the Moravian colony in Georgia—they had made another unsuccessful effort, this time to preach to a forlorn little Swiss-German settlement at Purysburg, S. C., and evangelize the slaves there—took the remnants of the pious band to Pennsylvania in his own sloop, and set them to building an orphan house for him on a tract of land which he had just acquired at Nazareth; but in the midst of the work, it being the beginning of winter, Whitefield fell out with them. It seems that a discussion had most inopportunately arisen on that perennial subject of contention, the doctrine of election, and the Moravian leaders were discovered not to be believers in a limited atonement. Thereupon Whitefield, with as little logic as charity, retorted by enjoining them to "quit this land at once." It is but just to note that this occurred at the time of Whitefield's break with the Wesleys on the same doc-



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trine; and he was probably harassed and sensitive. The remnant of those sorely tried Christians began a log house on the Lehigh, and there they were cheered by the intelligence that Count Zinzendorf was on his way to America. Landing at New York and stopping only to hold a few religious meetings in its neighborhood, he and his party reached the settlement on the Lehigh just before Christmas. The season, and the fact that the brethren were housed in a cabin part of which was used as a stable, naturally suggested the name of Bethlehem for the place. Zinzendorf did not long remain in Bethlehem; he felt so strongly the need of religious work among the neglected church people and the warring sects of Pennsylvania that he almost immediately began his labors in this outer field. The forlorn Lutheran congregation in Philadelphia called him and he became its pastor, suggesting the young minister—Pyrhäus—as his assistant. On “Second Christmas” (December 26th) of the same year, Henry Antes, “the pious elder of Falkner’s Swamp,” had sent out a call for a meeting of what was afterwards known as the Pennsylvania Synod—“not for the purpose of disputing, but in order to treat peaceably concerning the most important articles of the faith, and to ascertain how far they might all agree in the most essential points for the purpose of promoting mutual love and forbearance.” (Antes’ Call.)

At the first Synod delegates were present from nearly all the religious bodies of Pennsylvania; but the Mennonites and Schwenkfelders soon withdrew—the latter, indeed, were treated by Zinzendorf more in the tone of a

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feudal lord dealing with disobedient vassals than of a humble minister of the gospel; besides, the Schwenkfelders had a feeling respecting the church and the sacraments much like that held by the Quakers, while Zinzendorf always took a strongly Lutheran view of these matters. This probably alienated the Mennonites and Friends, among whom the Moravians had no success. A delegate from the Dunkers reported: "For three days I heard queer and wonderful things there. After my return home I went to my Superintendent and said that I looked upon the Count's conferences as snares for the purpose of bringing simple-minded and inexperienced converts back to infant baptism. We consulted with each other what to do and agreed to hold a yearly conference, or, as we call it, a Great Assembly. This is the beginning and foundation of the Great Assembly of the Baptists"<sup>1</sup>—or, as it is now called, the Annual Meeting. The Dunkers' conscience seems to have been troubled because baptism was administered by sprinkling instead of immersion. Prior Onesimus (Eckerlin), of the Ephrata Cloister, with several brethren, was also present at the early conferences, but Beissel was unfavorable to them, as he was to everything undertaken or approved by the Eckerlins, and soon the Ephrata Brethren ceased their attendance. Before long the church people suspected the Moravians of intending to set up another denomination, though in reality nothing could be further from Zinzendorf's thought. He, however, could not attend all the seven meetings which were held in differ-

<sup>1</sup>Brumbaugh; German Baptist Brethren, p. 477.

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ent places through the settled parts of the province, for he was absent during the summer visiting the Indians, with whom he had a great desire to begin mission work. Beside a preliminary visit among the Delawares, he inspected the new work at Shekomeko on the border between New York and Connecticut, and made a trip full of hardship and danger to Wyoming, where even he was compelled to admit that no lasting impression had been made, and where he was in danger of his life, being rescued by the timely reappearance of Conrad Weiser.

Meantime, Boehme, the earliest Reformed minister in Pennsylvania, had stirred up certain fellows of the baser sort to lock the Lutheran congregation out of their church and assault Pyrläus; later, he issued a violent pamphlet against Zinzendorf. "Gilbert Tennant, the Presbyterian minister at Philadelphia, preached from the pulpit," writes Zinzendorf, "that Benigna, Countess of Zinzendorf, is not my daughter, but a child that I had taken from the lieutenant of a vessel; and everybody asked my child if it is so."<sup>1</sup>

Gilbert Tennant published several sermons against "a pernicious new sect of people called Moravian Brethren or Hezenhouters," in which he thundered against "the detestable doctrine of the Moravians," "the Count's damnable heresies and errors," called them Antinomians and Universalists and finally declared that "it would take a large stretch of charity to conclude there is the least measure of Saving Grace in them, notwithstanding of all their great appearance." His book is concluded by the

<sup>1</sup> Zinzendorf's letter to Lord Granville, May, 1753.

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translation of a sermon having no apparent relation to the Moravians, by Abraham Hellenböck of Rotterdam, on "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil our vines," a wondrous allegorical performance.

Shortly after Zinzendorf's return to Bethlehem from his perilous expedition to Wyoming, Mühlenberg arrived in Philadelphia. He had, of course, no connection with the disturbances which had accompanied the preaching of the Moravians in the Lutheran congregation at that place, and Zinzendorf resigned the work into his hands without any open discord. The Count had received news from Europe concerning church matters there which made him feel his presence in Europe important, and he and his daughter therefore returned in the early months of 1743. Before leaving, Zinzendorf made an address, which he called his "Pennsylvania Testament," in which he laid down, to a company of his sympathizers, the principle that America must be treated in quite a different manner from Europe, "for to stretch both over the same last would spoil everything in the Saviour's cause."

It is unfortunate for the Moravian church in our country that Zinzendorf, a man peculiarly apt to be swayed strongly by passing impressions, did not permit his brethren to live up to this doctrine, but sometimes insisted upon applying European rules to the very different conditions of America. Particularly was this the case as to the avoidance of proselytizing, the urging of converts to remain in connection with their own denomination while also being connected with the Moravians;

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which inevitably led, under the conditions of those times, to a divided allegiance and to the accusation of Jesuitry and false pretence.

Spangenberg, now left to be the leader of the Brethren, was better fitted to work in a new country than was the noble, ardent, impractical gentleman who had just left Pennsylvania. Under the former's administration the Brethren continued their missionary and itinerary work, going not only to many places in Pennsylvania, but to Georgia, Virginia and North Carolina, a number of preaching places in New Jersey, Monocacy in Maryland, and even as far as "Canatschochary (Canajoharie) beyond Albany," where they found destitute Lutherans very glad to listen once again to the gospel in their own language. A number of missions were founded among the Indians in which the difficulties experienced were quite as much from the opposition of the whites as from the hardheartedness of the Indians. Schools were opened in several places, mainly, however, to educate the children of the community. The famous Moravian boarding-schools had a later origin.

Bishop Cammerhoff took an especial interest in this part of church work. In the Indian missions, also, he showed the warmest interest, and his death was brought about after but four years of episcopal work, by the hardships and dangers of his daring missionary tour to the Onandagas in New York State. In some respects Cammerhoff had an unfortunate influence, for he brought over with him much of the puerile and extravagant fashion in speaking of religious things which prevailed in the

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European Unity during what was afterwards known as the Sifting Time ; this distressed and alienated many of their strongest and warmest friends, especially Henry Antes.

One of the great monuments to Spangenberg in the Moravian church was his foundation and management of what is known as the Economy at Bethlehem. In this community all worked for the good of all, receiving board and clothing, and the missionaries their traveling expenses ; the product of their farming partly supported the community, besides which thirty-two different trades were carried on, ranging from milling and tanning to soap-boiling and shoe-cleaning. Besides this a number of houses and workshops were built at various settlements and Indian missions, and even a missionary ship, the snow "Irene," which served the Brethren ten years, until captured in 1758 by a French privateer. The church settlement at Nazareth was not so much a mission station as Bethlehem ; it was managed on what was called the patriarchal plan, the settlers being expected to raise in farming what was needed to support the Bethlehem "servants of the church." But they always asked "a blessing on the sweat of the brow and faithfulness in business,"<sup>1</sup> and hymns were written and love feasts celebrated for many different trades and occupations in the Nazareth settlement. Spangenberg also presided at several Synods which were gradually becoming exclusively Moravian ; and finally Zinzendorf's idea of a union of all Christians under the banner of the "Enthroned

<sup>1</sup> A petition still in use in the Sunday morning Litany of the Moravians.

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Lamb of God" was given up and in 1748 the formation of a Moravian denomination in America was at length decided upon and accomplished under the presidency of Bishop de Watteville. We may call the crowning achievement of Spangenberg's superintendency the establishment of the church settlement of Wachovia in North Carolina, which was founded amid almost insuperable hardships and difficulties, Spangenberg having gone with the exploring party which located the tract and named it after an Austrian estate of the Zinzendorf family. The motives for beginning this settlement were much the same as those which led to the founding of Bethlehem—a desire to do home mission work among the whites there, and to preach Christianity to the Indians. The first colonists cheerfully put up with a deserted log hut; but soon a settlement grew and other villages were founded in the surrounding tract. Most of these villages were given religious names, such as Bethabara, Bethania, Hope, Friedland, Salem—the last named became the largest and finally was the center of the settlement and capital of the southern province in the American church.

But all this expansion of the Brethren's Unity is not different from the annals of any other church, save as the Economy and the church-settlement idea are peculiar. The unique features of what might be called the Moravian period in the religious life of the Germans in this country showed themselves at the period of the first transplanting of Moravianism to America, and most strongly under the influence of Zinzendorf.

It is difficult to give a dispassionate view, even at this



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length of time, of Moravianism as an episode in religious history. From one point of view it appears as a grand but premature attempt at Christian union; from another—and that the standpoint of most of Zinzendorf's ecclesiastical contemporaries—as a confusing and divisive effort. It is quite evident that Zinzendorf's idea of forming a Unity of pious and enlightened people outside of and above their various denominational connections was impossible of realization, though something of the sort had been accomplished by the founders of Pietism in their "colleges" within the two Protestant churches. Apparently the state of religion among German-Americans was not so desperate as Zinzendorf supposed; at all events, they were not willing to admit him and his Moravians as their preachers and teachers.

One knows not how to regard Zinzendorf; whether to revere and admire him as did many of his own people; to think him an enthusiast, a mischievous interloper, or a disturber of the peace of the church as did many of the churchmen his own contemporaries; or to hold a middle course and think him and his fellow-laborers men sincerely desirous of doing good, and who frequently accomplished much, but who were sometimes mistaken, sometimes misled in the methods which they chose. Certainly no one can read the story of the Moravian movement without feeling the sincerity, the self-sacrifice, the loveliness of spirit which were the most marked characteristics of those who so earnestly sought to do good to the scattered, ignorant people—English and



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German, Quaker, Lutheran and Separatist, Indians, negroes or white men—in America.

NOTE.—A good sketch of the Moravians is that by J. Taylor Hamilton, American Church History series, Vol. IV. (N. Y., 1895). Spangenberg's "Life of Zinzendorf" is translated and abridged by Samuel Jackson, (London, 1838). L. T. Reichel's "Early History of the Moravian Church," (Nazareth, 1888), unfortunately goes only to 1748, but the history is to a certain extent carried on by another volume, II, of the transactions of the Moravian Historical Society (Nazareth, 1888), which contains sketches of many Moravian leaders and of the church in their time. J. M. Levering, "History of Bethlehem in Pennsylvania," (Bethlehem, 1903), also gives much more than its title promises. For the Schwenkfelders, see volume XIII, Proceedings of the Pennsylvania-German Society; H. W. Kriebel, "Schwenkfelders in Pennsylvania," (Lancaster, 1904), and Clewell, "History of Wachovia in North Carolina," (N. Y., 1902), for its subject. See also Gilbert Tennant, "The necessity of holding fast the truth presented in three Sermons, etc." (Boston, 1743.)

## CHAPTER V

### THE METHODISTS

THE influence of German religious life upon the early leaders of Methodism is not generally acknowledged, perhaps not generally known. The reciprocal influence of Methodism on the religious life of Germans in America is apparently still less known. The great fore-runner and companion of John Wesley, George Whitefield, had, as told in a previous chapter, some unpleasant dealings with the Moravians on "the Nazareth tract," but he had earlier as well as later intercourse with them, and with other German Christians which was more agreeable and profitable. In his early ministry at Savannah he speaks with delight and admiration of the Salzburgers' modesty and piety and gratitude,<sup>1</sup> of their clergymen—"two such pious ministers as I have not often seen;" he was encouraged by their example and that of "Prof. Francke," to found his Orphan-house in Georgia. Both here and in London he met and liked the Moravians, and "could not avoid admiring their great simplicity and deep experience in the inward life."<sup>2</sup> Afterward, at Germantown, Whitefield went to "see one Conrad Matthew, an aged Hermit, who has lived a solitary life near forty years; he was heir to a

<sup>1</sup> Journals, July 11, 1738.

<sup>2</sup> Journals, p. 229.

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great estate, but chose a voluntary poverty ; he has worked hard, but would always work without wages ; he is now unable to do much, but God sends somebody or other to feed him." This was the last survivor of the Hermits of the Wissahickon.

The Journal of Seward, Whitefield's traveling companion, says, under date of April 24, 1740, "Came to Christopher Weigner's plantation in Skippack where many *Dutch* people are settled and where the famous Mr. *Spalemborg* resided lately. It was surprising to see such a Multitude of people gathered together in such a Wilderness Country, Thirty Miles distant from *Philadelphia*. Our Brother was exceedingly carried out in his Sermon, \* \* \* and after he had done, our dear Friend, *Peter Boehler* preach'd in *Dutch* to those who could not understand our Brother in *English*. Came to *Henry Antes'* plantation in *Frederick Township*, Ten Miles farther in the country, where was also a Multitude equally surprising with that we had in the Morning. \* \* \* They were *Germans* where we dined and supp'd, and they pray'd and sang in *Dutch*, as we did in *English*, before and after eating." Whitefield writes subsequently that he has "had sweet times with some Lutheran ministers in *Philadelphia*."<sup>1</sup> After Whitefield's death, one of the many funeral sermons preached was by Zubly, the eloquent Reformed minister of Savannah, "at his meeting, which was also in mourning," as noted by the *Georgia Gazette*.

The connection of the Wesleys with German relig-

<sup>1</sup> Journal, October 8, 1746.

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ious life is much more extensive and better known. The conversations which John Wesley had with the Moravian brethren, led by Nitschmann, who were going out, on the same ship with the Wesleys, to continue their Georgian mission, the incident of the storm and the Germans' calm and pious courage which so impressed Wesley, his conversings with Spangenberg and Nitschmann—even permitting the Moravians to cast the lot upon his intended marriage—are well known. So are his and his brother's frequent interviews with Peter Böhler in London and Oxford, and John Wesley's New Birth while listening to "one reading" of Luther's preface to the epistle to the Romans. It is not so often mentioned that John Wesley put himself under the spiritual direction of the Moravians, visited Baron de Watteville, and subsequently Zinzendorf in his banishment at Marienborn, then went to Herrnhut and also to Halle. At the latter place he would not be likely to find a very favorable opinion of the Moravians, for the spirit of the old pietistic university was now opposed to them.

Perhaps this is part of the reason why Wesley soon began to question the principles and practices of his new religious friends. Nevertheless he admired many things which he had seen and heard sufficiently to publish jointly with his brother Charles a volume of "Hymns and Sacred Poems,"<sup>1</sup> in which we find, out of the one hundred and thirty-nine "Sacred Poems," twenty-two translations from the German, many of which have be-

<sup>1</sup>By John and Charles Wesley, Phila. Published by Andrew Bradford, 1740. "Sold for the benefit of the poor in Georgia."

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come naturalized as English hymns. They are among the best lyrics in a book which contains much that is "devout, but literary rubbish, and utterly unworthy of being used in public worship."<sup>1</sup> In the same year John Wesley published a translation and abridgment of one of Francke's treatises, "Nicodemus or the Fear of Man."

But later the "unhappy divisions" occurred between the Moravian Society in Fetter Lane and the Wesleys. The brothers had been at first appointed as its ministers, but later a young German, Molther, (whose wife had accompanied Benigna, Countess of Zinzendorf, to Bethlehem), was sent from Marienborn to assist them. He soon became the favorite in the congregation, and taught with much vehemence the wildest theories and expressions current in the German Unity during the Sifting Time. After much unprofitable and confusing discussion, Wesley was finally excluded from ministering in Fetter Lane and led his few adherents to the Foundry, a half-ruined manufactory; in this building the first Methodist society was formed in July, 1740. Attempts of a later date to effect a reconciliation were in vain; each church went its own way; but the Wesleys had taken much, in hymnology, doctrine, and details of organization, from the Germans, and these things still mark the Methodist Church with the German influences of its birth.

Many years afterward, in 1758, Wesley being in Ireland, visited a little settlement at Court Mattrass near Limerick, "a colony of Germans whose parents came

<sup>1</sup> Tyerman: Life and Times of John Wesley, p. 291.

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out of the Palatinate fifty years ago. Having no minister, they were becoming eminent for an utter neglect of all religion. But they are washed since they heard the truth which is able to save their souls. An oath is now rarely heard among them, or a drunkard seen in their borders. Court Mattrass is built in the form of a square, in the middle of which they have placed a pretty large preaching house.”<sup>1</sup>

These now pious and prosperous people were the descendants of a colony of three thousand “poor Palatines” sent to Ireland by Good Queen Anne in 1709, when thousands of distressed Germans came to London and were sent, some to North Carolina, some to the province of New York, and some to other parts of the United Kingdom. A few years after Wesley’s visit, several of the Palatines of Court Mattrass emigrated to New York; their local preacher, Philip Embury<sup>2</sup> and his cousin, Mrs. Barbara Heck, were among the emigrants.

“In the new land, amid the struggles to establish themselves which awaited the little company of poor Palatine weavers, Philip Embury demitted his humble ministry. At this juncture there ‘arose a mother in Israel,’—Barbara Heck. Coming one day into a neighbor’s house, she found some Palatines engaged in card-playing. To the pious Wesleyan woman this was a threatening of perdition. She threw the cards in the fire, and left the terrified card-players, to go immediately

<sup>1</sup> Wesley’s Journal abridged; quoted in Diffenderfer’s German Exodus to England, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> Amburg—See Diffenderfer’s German Exodus.

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to Embury's house. There she knelt at the feet of the young preacher, beseeching him with tears no longer to be silent, but to preach to his backsliding countrymen. 'God will require our blood at your hand,' she declared. Embury responded to the appeal of his slumbering sense of duty. Barbara Heck went out, collected four other like-minded ones, and to this little company Embury preached, they sang hymns, a 'class' was formed, and Embury became its leader,—the first class-leader of American Methodism." ("The Germans in Colonial Times," pp. 78, 79.) Barbara Heck devised a plan by which a plain church-building was erected.<sup>1</sup> Philip Embury wrought upon the church, being a carpenter by trade, and for this he received pay, which with occasional donations, was all the salary he ever received. There were many converted; presently, Capt. Webb, the military evangelist of early Methodism, came to help them. In a few years Embury removed to Camden, (Washington County), New York, accompanied by several friends; his kinsman, Peter Switzer, and Abraham Büninger, a Moravian missionary among the Indians and whites, who had crossed the Atlantic with Wesley, in 1735. Here, again, Embury founded a little Methodist society, to which he ministered during the remainder of his short life, for he died in his forty-fifth year, having injured himself fatally while mowing. His relatives and those of Barbara Heck subsequently emigrated to Canada.

<sup>1</sup> Back of this was finally erected a parsonage for the use of the traveling evangelists and furnished by gifts from the female members: thus "Mrs. Benninger" gave a window curtain and "Mrs. Hickey" one chair and cushion.



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There was apparently some Methodist missionary work done among the Germans of the Pipe Creek region of Maryland before Embury's preaching was resumed in New York: but the evidence of it is largely traditional and fails to give reliable dates. A class-leader, named Robert Strawbridge, came to this country in 1760, went to Sam's Creek, (Frederick County, Md.,) and as soon as his log house was finished, began to hold meetings there. Subsequently, while itinerating in Maryland, Strawbridge, contrary to Wesley's advice, administered the ordinances; but his converts were much on his side and a German Reformed minister, Benedict Swope, is quoted as saying, "Mr. Wesley did not do well in hindering Methodist preachers from giving the ordinances to their followers." Perhaps Swope's opinion was biassed by the fact that he himself ministered a good while previous to ordination. When, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Asbury attended the Baltimore conference of Methodists which met at Pipe Creek, he noted in his journal (Vol. III, p. 27), "Here Mr. Strawbridge formed the first society in Maryland and in America,"—which would give it the priority over Embury's church in New York.

Among those in connection with this society was a travelling preacher, John Hagarty, who is said (in spite of his name) to have been able to preach in German and in English. In the reminiscences of an early itinerant we have an account<sup>1</sup> of his meeting in 1813 with one of Strawbridge's German converts: "I was traveling a solitary path in the woods, between Barnesville and Marietta,

<sup>1</sup> Autobiography of James B. Finley, pp. 262-3.



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Ohio, and came upon an old man of the most grotesque appearance, trudging along at a slow rate, half bent, with an ax and two broomsticks on his shoulder." As I approached him I said, "Well, grandfather, how do you do?" He was a German and replied, "It ish well." "You seem to be poor as well as old?" "O, yes, in dis world I has noding, but in de oder world I has a Kingdom." "Do you love God?" "Yes, mit all my heart, and Gott loves me." "How long a time have you been loving God?" "Dis fifty years." "Do you belong to any church?" "O yes, I bees a Metodist." "Where did you join the Methodists?" "I jine de Metodists in Maryland under dat great man of Gott, Strawbridge, in Pipe Creek, and my wife, too, and Gott has been my Vater and my friend ever since; and I bless Gott I vill soon get home to see him in Himmel." This aged German's conversion under Strawbridge must have been about 1763.

Another of Strawbridge's converts was the means of awakening Philip Gatch, son of a Prussian redemptioner of Maryland, who afterwards was one of the first native American Methodist itinerants. Strawbridge also ministered to the community at Bohemia Manor, among the chief families, the Bayards and Sluyters, descendants of the Labadists, with whom Whitefield had had a great work. "Mr. Solomon Hersey that lived below the present Bohemia Mills at what was then called Sluyter's Mill was the first available friend to Methodism: he had the preaching at his house a number of years and the first society on the Eastern Shore (of Mary-

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land) was formed at Hersey's in 1772." (Lednum, p. 73.)

A few scattered notes concerning Germans who became connected with the Methodist movement in these pre-Revolutionary days may be added: they are necessarily scattered, for the bonds which united these converts into organized bodies—those of the United Brethren, and the Evangelical Association often called German Methodists—were not yet formed; this took place only after the Revolutionary storm was over. But these names and incidents may furnish some idea of the widespread nature of the Methodist movement among the Germans and show how when the German Methodist leaders, Martin Boehme and Henry Albright, arose, they found much people in that place.

It is said that Strawbridge preached at Martin Boehme's. In Montgomery County Hans Supplee built a church which he called Bethel before he knew of "the people called Methodists" only believing that "the Lord would raise up a people in that neighborhood to serve him."

The first Methodist meeting-house in Philadelphia was also provided through the agency of Germans, though quite involuntarily on their part. About 1763, a number of Germans, members of the Reformed congregation there, began to build a church and were not able to finish it—indeed some of them were imprisoned for debt contracted in connection with the building. Looking out of the debtors' prison, passers-by inquired for what they were imprisoned, to which they answered,

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“For building a church.” This unusual crime became a current joke in the city. The Methodists bought the edifice from these unfortunate promoters of church extension and called it “St. George’s M. E. Church.”<sup>1</sup>

A work which in its final development became connected with Methodism was that inaugurated and developed by a band of German Reformed ministers led by the Rev. William Otterbein of Baltimore. Otterbein, one of the young ministers brought over from Germany by Schlatter in 1742, was the son and grandson of Calvinistic clergymen; five of his brothers were in the service of that church. His mother had been wont to say, “I think my William will be a missionary, he is so frank, so open, so natural, so like a prophet,” and when the call came to him she gave him up to the vocation, with prayers and tears. Otterbein made a useful, active, and beloved minister on the frontier, going first to Lancaster, then evangelizing through York County, then at Frederick and at York, at all of which places he labored with much acceptance until reluctantly constrained to leave New York and assume the pastorship of the divided and distracted German Reformed church at Baltimore. There an

<sup>1</sup> A whimsical anecdote is told of one of the earliest German Methodists in Chester County, George Hoffman by name. While at his devotions he was interrupted by a knocking over his head and an unearthly voice which seemed to call thrice, “Yorick! Yorick! Yorick!” (the Pennsylvania German form of Jörg-George, his Christian name). Nothing doubting that this was a heavenly messenger, he cried out, “I’ll go with you as soon as I put on my new buckskin breeches.” Thus apparelled for translation, he rushed into the yard to discover that the summoning angel was a woodpecker or flicker, tapping and calling on his house-roof.

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unordained man, probably an elder of the Reformed church, Benedict Schwob, whose approval of Strawbridge's measures has been quoted, had attained great popularity in his ministrations, insomuch that the little congregation thought of calling him in place of their regular minister. The disaffected party finally retired and were ministered to by Schwob, who was presently ordained.

A year or two afterward, Francis Asbury came to Baltimore, preaching the doctrines of the Methodists and there met "Mr. Swoop, a preacher in High Dutch ; he appeared to be a good man and I opened to him the plan of Methodism." Subsequently Asbury met Otterbein and says that he and Schwob "agreed to imitate our method as nearly as possible." They therefore organized "classes" at five places in Maryland and arranged that the Reformed ministers in that State were to have the supervision of the work and meet semi-annually to receive reports.

These assemblings were no new nor especially Methodist affairs ; they were but the old assemblings for edification of Spener, of Labadie, of Untereyck, Lodenstein, Lampe and the other leaders of the German pietistic movement, or the choir meetings of Zinzendorf and the Moravians. "The ground and object of these meetings," says the earliest minutes, "is to be that those thus united may encourage each other, pray and sing in unison, and watch over each other's conduct. At these meetings they are to be especially careful to see to it that family worship is regularly maintained ; all those who are thus

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united are to take heed that no disturbances occur among them and that the affairs of the congregation be conducted and managed in an orderly manner.”<sup>1</sup> They were thus no separatistic conventicles which the “United Ministers,” as they called themselves, inaugurated; the unions were often organized by some ministers thereto appointed and the report from each society—they soon grew to be twelve in number—always states that they are “at peace”—“except,” say the minutes once, “a little trouble at Antietam which has been covered up with the mantle of charity,” they are “prosperous and serious,” “prosperous and at peace;” “the friends at Little Pipe Creek are at perfect peace and we trust enjoy a blessing.” “The friends in Baltimore are prosperous and meet as formerly. The congregation has, however, been considerably weakened by disturbances caused by the war.” This entry in the last minutes of the United Ministers in 1776, shows why this promising way of supplying the vacant churches of Maryland ceased for a time, and when it was again resumed, came under the influence of Asbury,<sup>2</sup> to become a body separated from the German Reformed church and connected with the Methodists under the name of the “United Brethren in

<sup>1</sup> See the minutes translated and republished by Dr. Dubbs. (Reformed Quarterly Review, January, 1884.)

<sup>2</sup> A strong personal friendship subsisted between Asbury and Otterbein; it must have been strong indeed since it survived Otterbein's frank criticism of Asbury's poetical efforts. The Methodist apostle wrote some religious verse which he showed his German brother before publishing, asking his opinion of it, to which Otterbein replied, “Brother Asbury, I don't think you was born a poet,” and the pious effusions were therefore unprinted.

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Christ." Between Otterbein's work and the formation of the United Brethren comes the great gulf of the Revolutionary War, changing the political relations of Americans not more than it did their religious and ecclesiastical ones.

NOTE:—Sources for the preceding section are Whitefield's "Journal," (London, 1739, 5th edition); Seward's "Journal," (London, 1740); Gillies: "Life of Whitefield," (N. Y., 1774); J. and C. Wesley: "Hymns and Sacred Poems," (Philadelphia, Andrew Bradford, 1740). Also Julian's "Dictionary of Hymnology," and the personal assistance of Dr. Louis F. Benson, editor of the Presbyterian Hymnal; Diffenderfer: "German Exodus of 1709," (Transactions of the Pennsylvania-German Society, Vol. VII, Lancaster, 1897). Stevens: "History of Methodism," (N. Y., 1864) Lednum, John; "History of the Rise of Methodism in America," (Philadelphia, 1859). Kuhns: "German and Swiss Settlements in Colonial Pennsylvania," (N. Y., 1901); American Church History Series, Vol. XII, Berger: "History of the United Brethren," (apparently written without knowledge of German or of the German Reformed sources) and Spreng: "History of Evangelical Association," (N. Y., 1894). See also Harbaugh: "Fathers of the Reformed Church," (Lancaster, 1872), Vol. II, sketch of Otterbein; also the histories of the Reformed Church by Good and Dubbs, and especially Dubbs: "Otterbein and the Reformed Church," published in Reformed Quarterly Review, January, 1884; also in pamphlet form, and the main facts incorporated in Dr. Dubbs' "Historic Manual of the Reformed Church," previously cited.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GERMAN CHURCHES DURING THE REVOLUTION

THE influence of the Revolutionary War upon German religious life was very different in respect to the peace sects and the church people. The non-resistant sects, Mennonites, Dunkers, Schwenkfelders, and the Moravians, who are otherwise commonly classed as church people, were all much harassed by the Test Act requiring them to take an oath, which was against their principles, and punishing with heavy fines their refusal to join the militia. Undoubtedly these measures were frequently used as the cloak of a private hostility ; and there was also suspicion that these people who would not fight would yet plot secretly and were, indeed, disguising Toryism under the garb of peace principles ; but this suspicion was in most instances groundless, though, of course, Tories did exist among the sects as among the church people. They were never numerous in any German denomination—the Teutonic element, religious or non-religious, being, as Bancroft says, “on the side of Liberty.” The care given by them to wounded soldiers went far towards producing a favorable opinion of the non-resistants. Those communities which possessed large buildings suitable for hospital purposes—such as Ephrata, Beth-



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lehem, and Salem in North Carolina—had the best opportunity to display such charity.

Many of the younger members of the peace sects went into the army, naturally sacrificing their church connection in so doing; thus, early in the war, the Lutheran pastor Helmuth reported that many Mennonites were drilling and “in great numbers are denying their former religious principles.” Saur’s paper also told of young Mennonites in Lancaster County who were taking up arms; and many of the younger Moravians disdained to make use of the exemption afforded those in the church settlements who were considered and treated as clergymen, and drilled with the rest. In the Saucon Valley a constable who had made it his business to worry non-resistant Mennonites, afterwards transferred his attention to the Moravians around Bethlehem. Two Mennonites, John Bear and his wife, volunteered to nurse the soldiers during the fearful outbreak of typhus in the Ephrata hospital; in a few weeks John Bear fell a victim to his Christian charity and a fortnight later his wife followed him to the grave—both unknown and unhonored martyrs to patriotism and religion.

The most prominent victim of the Test Act persecution among the German non-resistants was Christopher Saur, Jr., the Dunker preacher and printer. In his own manuscript account of his sufferings because “he was not free to take the oath to the States,” he tells how on returning to Germantown after taking refuge with his (Tory) children in Philadelphia, he was seized, stripped



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and treated with contemptuous cruelty until "God moved the heart of the most generous General Mühlenberg to come to me." Mühlenberg procured Saur a pass to go to Metachton, which was indeed generous, as Saur and his father before him had unsparingly abused Mühlenberg's father, "the Patriarch" of the Lutheran church. Subsequently Saur's property in Germantown was sold, on suspicion that he had gone to Philadelphia to give information to the Tories, and because Saur, as a consistent Dunker, declined the Test Oath. "Were you so attached to the King?" they asked him. "No," answered Saur, "it was not attachment to the King; but as you have in your act that they that do not take that oath shall not have a right to buy nor sell, and as I find in the book of Revelations that such a time will come when such a mark would be given, so I could not take that oath while it stood on that condition." "But you went to the English in Philadelphia," said an officer. "Do you know why?" asked Saur. "No," said the officer, "nor do I want to know." They took everything, even his medicines, of which he protested that none but he knew the use. "Then I beg'd for nothing more except my spectacles, which was granted."

Saur, thus reduced from prosperity and honor to poverty and contempt, found refuge in a little room in the upper story of a spring-house at a neighboring farm. His devoted daughter Catherine went with him—his wife having died shortly before—and ministered to her father for the few remaining years of his life.

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Various Brethren and friends sent money to relieve the necessities of this martyr to his principles; sums in "dollars, congress" and guineas, with tea, coffee, sugar—are carefully recorded in Saur's diary with the note: "all of which I promise honorably to repay as soon as God places me in condition to do so \* \* \* and I have trust in God that He will richly reward what I am not able to restore;" but in his last days he was enabled to write, tremulously, in that old diary: "The above has all been paid." On the birthday next following his impoverishment, Christopher Saur wrote a hymn, an acrostic on his name, the first verse of which runs:

Christians here must suit themselves  
To the Cross's narrow path,  
Here by patience and by stooping  
We must rise to heaven-heights;  
He who hopes with Christ to dwell  
Must the cross remember well.  
Those who there will be rewarded  
Crowns of thorns here too will carry.<sup>1</sup>

To the spoiling of his goods Saur made little protest; but the taking away of his good name he felt bitterly. He inquired of the Brethren's Annual Meeting whether they thought it inconsistent with their principles of non-resistance to evil to make some effort for the recovery of his reputation: "If a man is openly declared a traitor without a cause, without a trial, \* \* \* is it just to him let lie forever under that reproach?"

<sup>1</sup>This hymn and Saur's own account of his sufferings, are translated in Brumbaugh's History of the Brethren, pp. 415, et. seq.

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By the time of the Revolution the numbers of the Ephrata community of Dunkers had so declined that it was a negligible quantity to the military authorities ; but it was in possession of large buildings which could be used for hospitals, and after the battle of the Brandywine the authorities took the convent buildings Kedar and Zion for that purpose. About five hundred soldiers, some wounded in the battle, some suffering from typhus fever, were sent to Ephrata, and few indeed were sent away. The mortality, especially from the fever, was fearful. We have told of the self-devotion of the Mennonite John Bear and his wife : Brother Joannes Anguas of the Cloister took into one of the community's houses a young surgeon mortally ill with the fever, nursed him until his death, contracted the fever from his patient, and died of it. Ten of the brethren and sisters died during the hospital occupation of the Cloister, though it is by no means certain that all sacrificed their lives in nursing, as did Brother Joannes ; all the community, however, helped in the care of the sick. Everything which could be of use in hospital or the army in the field was taken for the purpose—grain, blankets and quilts from the Sisters' House, paper for cartridges, even to the prayer and hymn-books in the "Saal," as the Ephrata Community, with determined separatism called the church building of their Cloister. The buildings used as hospitals were, it is said, destroyed because of their infected state. Of the eight hundred soldiers brought there, two hundred died and were buried in the secular graveyards. For many years the only memorial to these patriots and

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martyrs was the inscription on the picket fence surrounding a brambly enclosure: "Hier ruhen die Gebeine vieler Soldaten;" but of late years a suitable shaft has been erected. Other property of the Society was sequestrated to keep it from falling into the hands of the British. Continental soldiers took away the unbound sheets of part of the great Martyr-Book, the brethren deciding that they could not give the paper to be used in war; but they would not resist force; so a guard of soldiers was sent who removed the property and thus saved the consciences of the non-resistant brotherhood. Their press was taken and put to the base use of printing Continental currency during Howe's occupation of Philadelphia.

It is said that the learned prior, Peter Miller, translated the Declaration of Independence into seven foreign languages. Probably he was the only person in the colonies who could have done it, but the evidence that he actually did so is not conclusive. Neither is that for the oft-told stock of Miller's Christian charity in saving from the gallows as a Tory spy, Michael Widman, a bigoted Reformed elder in Miller's old church, who abused, vilified, and even spat upon "Brother Jaebez" after he entered the Cloister. When Miller learned of his former enemy's peril he is said to have appealed to Washington's clemency. Washington deplored his inability to help the prior's "friend;" whereupon Miller explained that it was in reality not his friend but his bitterest enemy for whom he interceded. Washington, touched by Miller's forgiving nature, gave Widman's

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pardon into his hands, and Brother Jaebez walked twenty miles, from Valley Forge to the place where the execution was to take place, arriving just as the sentence was to be carried out. Widman, seeing Miller in the crowd, begged time of the officer to ask forgiveness of "the man he had most deeply wronged," and learned that this man was the bearer of his pardon.<sup>1</sup>

The tiny sect of Schwenkfelders might have seemed small enough to escape harassment on account of their conscience against war and oaths, yet they did not. At the first stirrings of patriotic feeling, Christopher Schultz, their most important leader, was on the Committee of Observation for his country, and he with another Schwenkfelder went as delegates to the provincial convention of 1775. At a meeting of various conscientious non-resistants at Reading in the same year, Reeser, an intimate friend of Schultz, said that they "were fully sensible of the justice of our cause and willing to contribute to its support." The sect observed the day of prayer appointed by Congress in 1776; Schultz conducted the services, reading Leviticus XVI and preaching from the text, "Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?" But they also suffered persecution under the Test Act. George Kriebel was imprisoned for a time in Easton on charges preferred by his neighbors, and in his old age he remembered how on Memorial Day of that year they held but a half-day's services. "We

<sup>1</sup>The story in the form later given to it may be found in Sachse's "Secretarians" and also in Walton and Brumbaugh's "Stories of Pennsylvania." It seems probable that it was, at least, founded on fact, and shows what was the common opinion of Miller's character.

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were uneasy about our families because in some cases wife and children, or even only the children, were at home; we considered it therefore advisable to dismiss at noon and return to our homes." It is believed that none in connection with the Schwenkfelder society took up arms. Christopher Schultz wrote in 1777 to Germany: "On account of war all things go wrong; the demands, injunctions and forcible extortions can scarcely be told which continually plague those who do not blow the horn of the war party. In spite of all this we have not allowed ourselves to be forced into the war."

The experiences of the Bethlehem Moravians during the Revolution are known to us in more detail than those of any other non-resistants. The geographic situation of Bethlehem made it convenient as hospital, refuge and prison, and these experiences, however trying at the time, brought the inhabitants of the "church settlement" in contact with many interesting persons and events. Moreover, the Moravian practice of keeping a "Diary" or history of a church settlement and its various interests and happenings, has preserved to us records, always contemporary and often vivid, of many men and things.

The Moravians had the same troubles with the Test Acts and with militia service, from the suspicions of ill-disposed neighbors of the unneighborly sort whose complaints had led to the imprisonment of Kriebel the Schwenkfelder, just mentioned. The society, along with other non-resistants, paid the heavy fines levied on members who would not drill. Franklin interfered to pre-

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vent their suffering for their principles, as a kindly letter from the sage to Bishop Seidel evinces.

Presently troops began to pass through on their way to the seat of war;—first the York County riflemen, pioneers in fringed hunting shirts marching “the nearest way” to the relief of Boston. Some of the officers stayed over a night and attended evening service. Troops often asked to have sermons preached to them, sometimes saying it might be their last opportunity in life to hear the gospel. Morgan’s riflemen came through from Virginia, and among those sharpshooters, as with the York County men mentioned above, were many Germans, the serious ones among whom must have enjoyed services in their native tongue. Next came a forlorn band of British prisoners, and following them and even more forlorn, their families in sleighs, it being the depth of winter;—to these poor shivering folk the good Moravians gave a donation of blankets. When the summer of 1776 brought around the fateful day of July 4th, “Brother Nathanael” (Bishop Seidel) exhorted his brethren “to remember the situation of things before the Lord.”

But later in that same year came the first test of the Unity’s readiness to give such help as they conscientiously could, when the hospital of the Continentals was moved there, the Brethrens’ House being taken therefor, and the brethren exhorted to “act on this occasion as becomes men and Christians.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was announced by the following letter from the Director General of the Continental Hospitals: “It gives me pain to be obliged by order of



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About two hundred and fifty soldiers were brought to Bethlehem, cases which could the least bear movement ; an equal number were taken on to Easton and Allentown, but this was too far for some poor fellows—two soldiers died in the wagons which brought them. Bishop Ettwein officiated as hospital chaplain, visiting and comforting the sick and burying the dead ; while the carpenters of the settlement made the coffins for those who died.

At the same time the Moravians of other settlements had been harassed about the Test Oath and militia acts, or were having hospitals and prisons placed in their church buildings. Thus, at Emmaus twenty-five members of the congregation were imprisoned for a month, and kept on bread and water, for refusing to take the oath.

At Hebron, near Lebanon, a church settlement had been projected, but only a chapel was built with a parsonage or residence for the minister in the lower story. In 1777 this was occupied by Brother Bader and his wife, who were greatly surprised and distressed by having the chapel confiscated to the use of several hundred captured Hessians taken at Trenton. These men were accompanied by women who sold liquor to them ; they took the church bass-viol and danced to its music, disregarding alike the rebukes of the pastor and of their officers ; presently when they left, Brother Bader dis-

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Congress to send my sick and wounded soldiers to your peaceable village—but so it is. Your large buildings must be appropriated to their use. We will want room for two thousand at Bethlehem, Easton, Allentown, etc. These are dreadful times, consequences of unnatural wars.”

[Signed.]

“W. Shippen.”



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gustedly remarked, "the chapel looks like a pig sty." Later powder and munitions of war were stored in the chapel to the great terror of the pastor. But when a party of officers came to inspect the improvised arsenal, Brother Bader played for them on the organ; and the charms of the music apparently so soothed their savage breasts that the explosives were removed and the chapel restored to its former peaceful use.<sup>1</sup>

At Lititz a hospital was established in those dark days of the winter of Valley Forge; there also "putrid fever" desolated the wards. Of two hundred and sixty-four patients, one hundred and twenty died, and their very burial place is to this day unknown. Of the Moravians who volunteered to help in the hospitals, five brethren caught the fever and died, among them Pastor Schmick, who having sometime before entered the service of his beloved Indian congregation at Gnadenhütten, in an alarm had been sent by the frightened Indian assistants back to Bethlehem, and thus met his death in a work of mercy at peaceful Lititz. At length in August, 1778, the diary of the settlement records: "We are devoutly thankful that the heavy burden of the hospital in our midst has been removed, and we certainly find it delightful to enjoy again our former peaceful life."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from Records of Moravian Congregation at Hebron, Pennsylvania, 1775-81, republished in Pennsylvania Magazine, Vol. XVIII, pp. 449, et seq., Philadelphia, 1904. During the occupation of the Hebron chapel, the officers of this regiment invited Bader to a Fourth of July celebration, adding, "The Rev. Mr. Bucher [their chaplain] would likewise be glad of your agreeable company," but the Moravian declined.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Jordan: "Military Hospitals."

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After this hospital occupation of Bethlehem was over, came streams of refugees; passing troops who usually behaved well, frequently attending church services; then prisoners, among them the soldier-preacher, Captain Webb, whom we have seen before as Philip Embury's helper. He resided in Bethlehem some time with his family as a prisoner on parole, and during this residence ministered to any soldiers who chanced to be there.

The Liberty Bell was brought through the town under guard of Mickly, who took it to Allentown and secreted it under the floor of the German Reformed Church; the wagon bearing the bell broke down in "the square" and many went to gaze upon what was even then a beloved object. But after the battle of Brandywine Bethlehem was a second time turned into a place of hospitals. Like Ephrata at the same epoch, and like the other community, it then experienced all the horrors of a typhus epidemic, the mortality being as fearful as at the Zion cloister, with the addition that there were many times more patients. No one ever will know the number of the dead, save that it exceeded a thousand; they were buried secretly, without services, without coffins, their names unrecorded, the bodies carried away in carts through the dusk of the winter mornings. Some of the surgeons and soldiers who died were buried in the church graveyard; the "Stranger's Row" was first opened in that time of pestilence. Bishop Ettwein's son John, a youth of nineteen, ministering in the hospitals, caught the plague and died.

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The hospitals were not finally removed until the spring of the year 1778.

One of the distinguished patients nursed at Bethlehem was the Marquis La Fayette, who was brought there wounded at the Brandywine, and nursed at the house of Brother Boeckel by his wife Barbara and his daughter Liesel, and well nursed it appears, for he recovered sufficiently to leave before the typhus epidemic broke out. During La Fayette's illness, another foreign nobleman and volunteer for the cause of American freedom came to visit him—Pulaski. It was at this time that Pulaski procured the banner to which Longfellow's poem refers, and which was probably ordered and paid for in a purely business way from the Sisters who did much beautiful embroidery and who were not "nuns" any more than the little "Old Chapel" contained a "dim mysterious aisle;" but the poem was the production of an eighteen-year-old boy for whom better excuse can be made than for certain older describers of Bethlehem who are even more wildly imaginative.

The next representatives of foreign nobility to whom the Moravians were asked to extend their kindness, were the Baron and Baroness Riedesel and their family. Other prisoners of war and officers of the Brunswick regiment of foreign mercenaries stayed in Bethlehem for some time, passing Holy Week there, at which time they partook of communion with the congregation. Their chaplain added to the ties between them and the townsfolk by his marriage to a Bethlehem girl. Scarcely had the Brunswick chaplain and his Agnes

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departed when the town was flattered and delighted by a sudden visit from "Lady Washington;" her august husband himself came later in the summer of 1782, and in his stately way showed himself very gracious. Then followed soldiers and sailors; Ziegler, who had met some of the European brethren at St. Petersburg while he was in the Russian service, and John Paul Jones, who spent some time in the settlement.

In all the annoyances and worries of these troubled battle years it must have been a great comfort to the Brethren to have the help of Bishop Reichel, sent over from the conference of the Unity at Herrnhut to assist the aged "Brother Nathanael." He remained for two years, but unfortunately had left before the terrible news of the massacre of the Indian converts at Gnadenhütten in Ohio, killed by report the old Bishop Seidel who had been instrumental in founding this settlement and removing thither the converts from their first town on the banks of Beaver creek.

Thence, invited by the wild Indians, they had gone under the advice and conduct of their devoted missionaries, Zeisberger and Heckewelder, to the banks of the Muskingum where more than two hundred Indian converts from the Moravian missions of eastern Pennsylvania joined them, crossing the Alleghenies in a great cavalcade, descending the Ohio by means of canoes which they built, and so increasing the settlement on the Muskingum that there were presently three towns: Salem, Schoenbrunn and Gnadenhütten—"a candlestick in the Delaware country." The pioneers hated the

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Indian converts and suspected them of Toryism ; the British at Detroit, on the other hand, thought "they took the American part," and that the missionaries were spies. Toward the end of the Revolution, the whole community were captured and taken to Sandusky Creek, where they settled and where they "so much disliked the situation that they gave the town no name." Famine afflicted the exiles ; their beloved missionaries were torn from them to go into captivity at Detroit ; so the Indians sent an expedition south to their old villages in order "to fetch provisions, a report prevailing that there was no danger in these parts."

Never was a report more unfounded. Instantly a party of white militia was raised on the Ohio to surprise the Indians at Gnadenhütten ; Gibson, the commandant at Fort Pitt, sent a warning but it was too late. A chance white man also warned them, but the Indians were not afraid, because they thought there was "nothing to fear from the Americans." The militia first encountered in the woods young Schebosch, the son of a missionary and his Indian wife, and though he begged for his life, saying he was the son of "a white Christian man," they cut him to pieces with their hatchets. Arriving at Gnadenhütten the militia assured the Indians of their sympathy, saying they had come to escort them to a safe refuge at Fort Pitt ; the Indians delivered up their guns and arms, showed where they had hidden provisions in the woods, and "even emptied all their bee-hives for their pretended friends." The frontiersmen expressed a desire to see the other town of Salem, and

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the converts took them thither, having religious conversation by the way. The Salem people were brought over to Gnadenhütten and the militia then threw off the masque of friendship, disarmed the Salem Indians even to their pocket-knives, thrust all their prisoners into two cabins, and after granting them time to prepare for death, killed and scalped them every one, ninety-two persons, among them some of the most valuable "Indian assistants" or native missionaries; one-third of the number, however, being children. The militia-men commented upon the Moravian Indians' behavior, that they must have been good people, "for," said they, "they sang and prayed to their latest breath." The Schoenbrunn people were saved through the providential discovery by a messenger sent to them from Detroit, of young Schebosch's mangled body in the woods. The Indians of Schoenbrunn hid themselves, watched the militia plunder their houses and then depart with the scalps taken at Gnadenhütten. The horses, blankets and other plunder, were afterwards exhibited and sold at Fort Pitt. In this manner was Brother Schebosch first apprised of his son's death.

After this story of martyrdom and suffering it seems an anti-climax to speak of the troubles of the Moravians in "the Wachovia tract" centering about Salem in North Carolina; troubles brought upon the community mainly by their opposition to war and oaths. They were finally overcome, as in the case of the Northern brethren, by the care given the wounded soldiers who were brought to Salem for nursing. At one time, however, suspicion

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of these pious non-resistants' loyalty ran so high that it was expected that the Legislature would confiscate their land; the people of Salem made preparation to leave their homes, the surrounding inhabitants had already selected the tracts of land which they would take up and filed claims for them, when the Legislature decided to permit affirmation in place of the oath and the houses and lands of Salem were saved. Prisoners, unruly and plundering militia, wounded men and high officials of the provinces passed through Salem as through other Moravian towns; twice the Legislature endeavored to meet there but could not get a quorum; at length, on July 4, 1783, the congregation in Salem kept a peace jubilee, with "a psalm of joy" written for the occasion and beginning "Peace is with us! peace is with us!" which doubtless expressed in some measure their joy and relief.

In the story of the Revolution as it affected the Lutheran and Reformed, we find no such tales of non-resistants' sufferings for conscience sake as we have met among the "peace sects:" the church people not only had no objection to fighting, but they were, many of them, very fiery and militant in their patriotism. Many of the soldiers of the Revolution were prominent members of either denominations; thus Colonel Antes, the four brothers of the Hiester family who entered the army, and Michael Hillegas, the treasurer of the Continental Congress, were all of the Reformed church, as were Herkimer,—the gallant defender of the Mohawk valley, the hero of Oriskany—and General Steuben, who was an



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elder in the German Reformed church in New York City.

The great body of the clergy stood for liberty; they preached numerous sermons the texts of which constitute a quaint collection; some went into the army as chaplains, like Michael of Lehigh County, and John Conrad Bucher, who had been a soldier before he was a preacher and now returned to the army as a chaplain in Marsteller's regiment. Gobrecht of Hanover preached to companies on their way to the war; while Weyberg of Philadelphia was so persuasive in his patriotic sermons that it was said that had the British not imprisoned him, all the Hessians who heard him would have left the British service. During Weyberg's imprisonment the large, fine church building was taken for a hospital; his first sermon after his liberation was on the text, "O God, the heathen are entered into Thine inheritance; Thy holy temple have they defiled." The Reformed churches at the Trappe, East Vincent, Skippack and Falkner's Swamp were also taken for hospitals, as was that at Lebanon. The aged Schlatter, in his modest cottage at Chestnut Hill, was plundered and taken a prisoner to Philadelphia. At Guilford in South Carolina, Suther and his patriot parishioners were driven out by the Tories of the congregation and their possessions plundered. In New Jersey, Nevelling, a cousin of the eloquent pastor Weyberg, lent all his money to the Continental cause, and lost it,—a serious matter to him in the long years of invalidism which closed his life when he was old, blind and paralyzed. Nevelling was so valuable to the



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British that they are said to have offered a reward for his apprehension, and so valued by Washington that he sent a troop of horse to guard him. Faehring, another Reformed pastor of New York State died from the consequences of exposure endured in his flight from the British. Hendel had congregations "beyond the Blue mountains" which he desired to serve in those troublous times despite dangers from British and Indians, so his expectant hearers used to send an escort to meet him, stand guard around the church while he preached, and then accompany him home across the mountains. At the Cacusi church near Wernersville, built in 1766, an inscription over the door announced that "all who go out and in must be true to God and the King;" but after the war, during which many of the members went into the Continental army, one of the builders climbed up and chiseled out the word "king." The inscription remains to this day in that mutilated condition. Stahlschmidt left his congregation at New York because it contained some Tories who would not have a patriotic minister. Returning to Germany, he became a successor of Tersteegen in leading the pietistic party in the principality of Siegen, and his influence was instrumental in preserving that part of the country from the rationalistic influences which threatened at one time to blight the church. The driving out of Weber, another patriotic pastor from his Eastern Pennsylvania charge, wrought an undesigned good work also; for Weber, going into the wilds of Westmoreland County, became the pioneer of Reformed Home Missions in that region, preaching as

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far as Fort Pitt. Runkel ministered to the soldiers at Valley Forge, and it is testified of him that "he was a devout Christian and true patriot, one of the hardest workers in the cause of religion and his presence among Washington's soldiers was always attended by good results." His ministrations were not always strictly religious, as when once following the suffering troops on the march, he found a soldier whose feet were so cut and bleeding that he could no longer march. Runkel picked him up, put him on his back and carried him to Morristown where he had friends. The energetic and helpful pastor also assisted Baron Steuben in drilling the troops, translating the German officers' commands into English to Steuben's great satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

Not all the Reformed ministers were so ardently patriotic as these just mentioned, and of those who did not rise to the height of the occasion the greatest name is that of Zubly, "the most eminent Reformed minister of America." John Joachim Zubly, a native of St. Gall in Switzerland, member of a family of influence and position there, joined his father at Purysburg, South Carolina, while a young man, though already ordained and a "boy preacher" of unusual talents and promise. He did much evangelistic work among the German settlements of the Carolinas and Georgias, ministering at Frederica, Orangeburg and Charleston; thence he was called to an important church in Savannah, composed of Reformed, Lutherans, and Catholics, where he officiated with great success and acceptance, preaching

<sup>1</sup>Good: German Reformed Church in United States, p. 627, foot note.

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to his diverse congregation in English, German and French. Mühlenberg who visited him said, "He has a larger collection of fine books than I have seen elsewhere in America." Princeton honored him with the title of D.D. He was a near friend of Whitefield who called him "his son in the Lord," and for his orphanage project, Zubly made a collecting tour through the north, which had as a personal result a number of calls from prominent churches there. But the brilliant Swiss preferred to dwell among his own people who loved and honored him, and who sent him at the beginning of the Revolutionary movement to Philadelphia as a delegate to the Continental Congress.

Zubly could not endure the thought of an entire separation from the mother country; he left Philadelphia a few months before the Declaration of Independence was adopted and returned to Savannah, where he found himself now hated, proscribed, and exiled. His property was confiscated, first by the patriots, afterwards, during their occupation of the city, by the British, who knew no more of him than that he had been a "rebel leader." At length the tide turned; he was recalled to Savannah by his people, and ministered to them for a few years; but he was a broken man and died before the end of the Revolution, in 1781. "His career in Church and State can hardly be called more than a brilliant failure."<sup>1</sup>

In regard to the Lutherans' attitude toward the Revolution, it is difficult to discriminate between them and

<sup>1</sup> Dubbs: Reformed Church in Pennsylvania, p. 219.

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the Reformed and tell what part to credit to the followers of Luther specifically, because so many people made use of the services of either denomination and most of the country churches were "union" ones, ministered to by Lutheran and Reformed on different Sundays, but with otherwise little distinction. When, at the outbreak of the Revolution, the German church people of Philadelphia desired to fire the patriotism of the Mohawk Valley and the southern Germans, the officials of both Reformed and Lutheran churches joined with the officers of the benevolent "German Society" in the "Address" they issued.<sup>1</sup>

The Lutheran pastor Helmuth, of Philadelphia, has already been quoted; he says further regarding the state of feeling in that city in 1775: "Where a hundred men are desired many more than that number immediately appear, who then because they are not all needed are turned back to their own great dissatisfaction. In my own slight acquaintance with history, I know of no parallel state of affairs. Regions of which one was obliged to believe that it would be years before the people freely gave themselves to martial affairs, as soon as the news of the first clash at Lexington was heard, became very warlike in a few weeks. \* \* \* The whole land from New England to Georgia is all of one mind to risk body and life in order to assert its freedom. The few who think otherwise dare not speak

<sup>1</sup>Schreiben des Lutherischen und Reformirten Kirchen-raths an die Teutschen Einwohner, etc., quoted in Seidensticker's *Bilder* and summarized in my "Germans in Colonial Times," p. 240.

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otherwise. \* \* \* In Philadelphia the English and German pupils in the schools have formed soldier companies and are drilled like regular troops. Would God that men might once assert their spiritual freedom as zealously and unanimously as they here in America rise to the defense of their bodily freedom." (Republished in Schmauk ; Lutheran Church in Pennsylvania, pp. 335-36.)

In Charleston, the Lutheran pastor, Streit, who had served as chaplain of the Third Virginia regiment, was obliged to flee from the city when the British took possession. The church to which Streit ministered, St. John's, was so patriotic that a whole company of Continental troops, the "German Fusileers," was formed out of members of his congregation: they took part in several engagements, their captain being killed in action at Savannah. Another of their pastors, Martin,—it was a collegiate church—because he would not pray for the king, had his property confiscated by the British at the taking of Charleston, and was forced to flee from the city. The church provided itself *ad interim* with two other ministers "less exceptionable to our foreign rulers," as they said;—probably more willing to pray for King George. In Western North Carolina, Nussmann's congregations suffered much in the war, losing both lives and property in the cause. Nussmann's coadjutor, Arndt, was obliged to remain in hiding on account of his patriotic outspokenness. At Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the congregation in 1780 called the Rev. John George Butler (Bottler) who, before he entered the ministry, had

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been a soldier in the Continental army, serving in Virginia. One of the Ebenezer pastors, Rabenhorst, had his homestead burnt as well as his church turned into a stable by the invaders; several of his parishioners were active and prominent on the "rebel" side. But Triebner, the other pastor, officiated as guide to the British force and found it prudent to go with the invaders when they left South Carolina. So did a Northern clergyman, Hausihl, who accompanied some exiled German loyalists to Nova Scotia.

The best known of all the German patriots of the Revolution is probably that son of the patriarch Mühlenberg, who so dramatically exchanged the Geneva gown for the Continental uniform, in the Lutheran church of Woodstock in Virginia. This Peter Mühlenberg had already undergone some military experience, for, when sent as a boy to Halle for his education, he ran away and enlisted in a dragoon regiment, where a British officer recognized him, extricated him with some difficulty,—enlistments in the German army were then for life;—and brought "Peter the Devil," as he was known in the ranks, to America as his secretary. Peter now completed his education without further mishap, was ordained in London and became pastor of a German church in the Shenandoah Valley. There Washington learned to know and value him, asking him at the outbreak of the Revolution to take the colonelcy of the Eighth Virginia Regiment. In January, of 1776, the Reverend Peter preached at Woodstock from the third chapter of Ecclesiastes: "To every thing there is a season, and a

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time to every purpose under the heaven : \* \* \* a time of war and a time of peace :” and ended his sermon with the statement that “in the language of Holy Writ there was a time for all things—a time to pray and a time to preach—but those times have passed away ; there is a time to fight, and the time to fight is here !” Then he prayed ; “Hold us up, O Lord, Lord our God, that we may live ; and let our hope never make us ashamed. Help us by thy might, that we may wax strong ; and so shall we ever delight ourselves in thy statutes,” gave the benediction,<sup>1</sup> removed his clerical gown and showed himself attired in a colonel’s uniform. Three hundred men of his congregation enlisted under him.

He fought at Sullivan’s Island, was made a Brigadier General, and at Brandywine his troops and those of Weedon (the German Baron von der Wieden) bore the brunt of the action ; here, as he himself used to tell, some German dragoons, seeing him heading a charge, recognized him as their former comrade, and cried out “Here comes Peter the Devil !” At Germantown General Mühlenberg had a narrow escape. A British officer seized a musket, loaded it and would have killed him, had not the General drawn his pistol and shot the other dead. He fought also at Monmouth and Stony Point, served under Steuben against the traitor Arnold in Virginia, and finally led the assault at Yorktown. He was made a Major General at the close of the war, when he

<sup>1</sup> This account of Peter Mühlenberg’s last sermon is pieced together from many sources ; the prayer is taken from the manuscript of the liturgy which he used, in his own handwriting.



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removed to Pennsylvania. He never re-entered the ministry, but was prominent and useful in civil life.

His younger brother, Frederick Augustus, went also to Halle for education. Finishing his course there, he was ordained and became pastor of a Lutheran church in New York City, his piety, fine education, eloquence and polished manners fitting him well for a metropolitan position. But he proved as outspoken in his patriotism as the rest of the family, and when the British took possession of New York, was obliged to seek refuge in Philadelphia. That city sent him as a delegate to the Continental Congress, and afterwards to the State Legislature; he also filled other prominent civil positions. Like his brother, the General, he never returned to the ministry.

Ernest Mühlenberg, the youngest son of the patriarch, continued a Lutheran clergyman all his life. He was at Halle with his brothers, then became a pastor in Philadelphia, but was too patriotic to find a stay there safe during Howe's occupation;—taking refuge in the country he interested himself in botany and mineralogy and became distinguished in their pursuit. He was a pastor in Lancaster from 1780 until his death.

These chronicles of German church life in this momentous epoch seem mere catalogues of names and trifling details, but it is only in this way, by giving the slight, often homely events, that we can see what the Revolution was as it came to the homes, hearts and consciences of men. From these scattered remnants of history, we may picture to ourselves the many nameless,

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unknown heroes and patriots and Christians who made our country "free and independent." In this great task the Germans, pastors and people, bore a large and honorable part.

NOTE:—The history of German religious life during the Revolution is found scattered through the special histories before cited: Brumbaugh: "History of the German Baptist Brethren;" Seidensticker: "Bilder;" Pennypacker: "Historical and Biographical Sketches;" "Ephrata monument designed and to be erected over the remains of two hundred American soldiers, etc.," 1845; Sachse: "Sectarians;" Kriebel: "Schwenkfelders in Pennsylvania;" Levering: "Bethlehem in Pennsylvania;" Clewell: "Wachovia;" Dubbs: "Historic Manual;" and "Reformed Church in Pennsylvania;" Jacobs: "Lutheran Church;" in American Church History series, Vol. 4; Jordan: "Military Hospitals at Bethlehem and Lititz;" (Philadelphia, 1896). Loskiel: "History of Missions," translated by Latrobe (London, 1794), gives a good account of the Moravian missions among the Indians and a dispassionate story of the Gnadenhütten massacre. I am indebted to Mr. Jordan for supplying me with his "Extracts from Records of Moravian Congregation at Hebron, Pa., 1775-81," republished in Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. XVIII, pp. 449, et seq. I have also used H. M. M. Richards: "Descendants of H. M. Mühlenberg," Pennsylvania German Society's transactions, Vol. X, part 3.

## CONCLUSION

IN taking leave of this study of the religious life of the Germans in America during the Colonial period, a few general impressions are left upon the student's mind which may be worth recapitulating. One concerns the opinion held of the German churches and church people by the English colonists ; another the judgment passed upon the Germans by some of their clerical fellow-countrymen. In the first case, the Germans were not so ignorant as was generally supposed by men who could not read or speak their language. Secondly, moral conditions were not so bad among them as they appear to some observers and reporters of the German race and language.

That the Germans were not so illiterate and brutish as the founders of the Charity School project thought them, has frequently been stated ;—the gloomy picture drawn by Provost Smith could scarcely have applied to any but a few small and remote frontier clearings. The earliest emigration of Separatists and sectarians was characterized by the number of learned men who dwelt among such communities as Germantown and that of the Wissahickon Hermits. These men were often "cranks," but frequently it was much learning which had made them mad. In the later emigration of the church people, one is struck with the number of university graduates

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among the clergymen—mostly of course from the pietistic centers of Herborn, Halle and Giessen. The prominence of the schoolmaster in the early settlements is another witness to German zeal for education; this personage, in early times, frequently conducted services, read sermons, and, among the Lutherans, baptized children who were thought to be in the article of death, besides teaching reading, writing, the catechism and hymns. Often such a schoolmaster developed into a religious worker, ordained or unordained. The later movements of Moravianism or Methodism made greater use of the “pious laymen” than was encouraged in the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches; but we have seen that these two denominations owed their origins here to laymen only subsequently ordained—to Stoever and to Boehm respectively. But even in the later movements mentioned, the leaders were university men and clergymen, “pious, learned and regularly ordained,”<sup>1</sup> for among those leaders were, beside the Englishmen Whitefield and the Wesleys, Germans fully their equals, such as Spangenberg, Zinzendorf, John Wesley’s teacher Böhler. Of the church people one need only mention such names as Mühlenberg and his three ministerial sons, Schlatter, Otterbein and Zubly,—leaders and representatives of scores of faithful, learned and earnest men who laid the foundations for the churches of the Fatherland in this new land. Among the sects, such as the Mennonites, Dunkers and Schwenkfelders, who disapproved of a

<sup>1</sup>To quote the testimony of Mühlenberg to the character of one of the writer’s ancestors, Rev. John Georg Bager of St. Michaels, Conewago.

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paid and "man-made" ministry, it is evident that there was not great ignorance; the literary activity of the Dunker monks of Ephrata, the support of Saur's press and paper—the latter with a circulation of several thousands,—the manuscripts of the Schwenkfelders, the school and school-books of the Mennonite Christopher Dock, all show a condition the reverse of ignorance or of illiteracy.

As the intellectual state of the Germans was not so bad as painted by the English Charity School Society, so neither was the moral one such as one might gather from the accounts which German observers sent back to Europe—those of Mühlenberg for instance, in the Halle Reports. These rather refer to the lack of clergymen and of regularly organized churches than to real moral or ethical decadence. Surely people as anxious as these struggling pioneers showed themselves for the ministrations of the church were not sunk in indifference and irreligion. They paid the passage of clergymen, they built churches, they flocked in crowds to services; in default of a minister, schoolmaster or elder read a sermon or a service; they were instructed in the Scriptures, the hymns, the devotional works of the Fatherland. The universal testimony of the English colonists, who neither liked nor understood the Germans, shows that their moral character compelled favorable opinion. This was the case with the celibates of Ephrata whose whole manner of life brought them under suspicion, and with the Moravians, who were preceded or followed in their earlier years by the most

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violent denunciations from highly-esteemed religious leaders, both English and Continental, and whose peculiarities of life and expression laid them open to much misconstruction.

The effect of the events which separated the colonies from the mother country was almost entirely a good one. The rule of the various European bodies which gave direction or help to the struggling congregations in the American wilderness had been important and well intentioned ; but from distance, uncertainty of communication, and, most of all, from ignorance of American conditions, became, instead of a help, a yoke not easy to be borne. The Calvinistic "Fathers in Holland," the Lutheran pietists at Halle, as well as the Mennonite Committee in Amsterdam, were all alike in their insistence that nothing should be done without their advice. They wanted to appropriate the money, direct the action, ordain the clergymen,—in short, do whatever under their various constitutions, might be proper for a superior body to do. They frequently treated their American brethren with that "certain condescension" which a much later authority has noticed in "foreigners." Though at first the German Americans, left to themselves, felt and showed the lack of contact with European culture and there was in Church as in State, in German as in English colonists a certain intellectual and moral decadence, a critical period to pass through, yet, at the end, independence here opened a new era of renewed activity, and led to the production in the German religious life, as elsewhere,

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of an American type of church life instead of a European one. It was the end of an era of following, of imitation, of essential provinciality, and the beginning of a religious life characterized by freedom and independence.

NOTE.—In the nature of things, no references can be given for any statement in the foregoing section. The reader may rest assured that these generalizations are made from many particular instances, and that in making them, although not giving author and page, the present writer does not speak without the book.



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